

# HAIDA CARVERS

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IN ARGILLITE



MARIUS BARBEAU

NATIONAL MUSEUM  
OF MAN  
FACSIMILE EDITION

MUSÉE NATIONAL  
DE L'HOMME  
EDITION FACSIMILE

NATIONAL MUSEUMS OF CANADA

MUSÉES NATIONAUX DU CANADA

OTTAWA 1974







# HAIDA CARVERS

in

## ARGILLITE

BY

### MARIUS BARBEAU

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DEPARTMENT OF NORTHERN AFFAIRS AND  
NATIONAL RESOURCES  
NATIONAL MUSEUM OF CANADA

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AP.



*The arrival of the white man in Alaska and on the North Pacific Coast after 1741 was slow and marginal at first. It did not smother the vitality and activities of the Mongolian-like tribes of this area, as it is generally believed, nor blunt their skills and handicrafts.*

*Far from it! The white man's arrival fostered a fresh outlook and orientation. Stirring up new ambitions, it provoked incentives that brought about a unique social system endowed with a 'totemic atmosphere' out of whose scattered elements evolved a craftsmanship and an art that are well-nigh unsurpassed in North America, if not elsewhere as well.*

*Let this book draw out of a deceptive obscurity the notable works of Haida carvers of argillite, most of whom were thriving in the second half of the nineteenth century! Their contribution to culture at large will eventually find its way into the forums of universality.*







## P R E F A C E

This volume is the second on Haida Art published by the National Museum of Canada. *Haida Myths Illustrated in Argillite Carvings*, which appeared in 1953, contains a number of tales belonging to the Queen Charlotte islanders and more than three hundred illustrations of the work by Haida craftsmen of the past two or three generations. The main stress there, is on the mythology as part of a huge cultural tree belonging no less to the Old World than to the New.

But in the present volume, *Haida Carvers in Argillite*, the artisans themselves are in the spotlight. The work and the lives of more than forty of them have been studied at first hand during two visits paid to their islands, in 1939 and in 1947, and abundant materials found from 1915 onwards, in museum collections, both public and private, in North America and Europe, have been included. The list of these and due acknowledgments are given in Volume I, *Haida Myths* (p. ix).

## A C K N O W L E D G M E N T S

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# HAIDA CARVERS IN ARGILLITE

## BACKGROUNDS

Forming part of aboriginal utilities in daily life, the manual arts of the North American Indians belonged to a multitude. Anthropologists in their studies of this subject have seldom resorted to the methods long familiar in the history of art in Europe and America. On the whole, they have not sought the identity of the native workers who were personally responsible for the progress of their craft. A haze of generalities from their pens and insufficient data leave whoever consults them under the impression that every activity among the Red Men was shared by all on the same communistic level. This criticism applies also to the ethnographic publications on the plastic arts of the North Pacific Coast—of the Haida, Tsimshian, and Tlingit in particular. Few carvers, except perhaps Edensaw, were ever portrayed or even mentioned by name in their own setting. The totem poles and other forms of heraldic and decorative arts in that category seemed to have sprung up anonymously, from nowhere precisely. The lack of information leads one to believe that form and pattern had come down there ready-made, out of prehistory. For instance, a fine Haida totem pole now in the park at Prince Rupert in British Columbia, that of the Bear Mother of Kyusta, was labelled as being 200 years old, when actually it was much less than a hundred, and the name of its maker could have been secured for the asking and duly recorded for posterity.

Haida art, like that of neighbouring nations, can be studied and presented under its true colours. It is the product of individual effort at the hands of craftsmen whose activities and careers were well known to their contemporaries at Skidegate and Massett, down to the present. Their talents and skills were rated as they deserved by their fellow-workers at home and by their casual patrons outside. Their inventiveness and progress developed from 1820 onwards and reached a peak only during the last four decades of that century.

The proof of this seemingly bold assertion is made plain in my own publications on Totem Poles and Haida Myths. The present *Haida Carvers* further sets forth the names and achievements of more than forty Skidegate and Massett artisans and illustrates their extraordinary progress within the memory of man. If one decides to learn at first hand about them, nothing will be out of focus, for neither would anonymity satisfy a French historian of the Barbizon school of painters concerning Millet, Rousseau, and their impressionistic contemporaries. Likewise, in this book on Haida argillite work, we shall look into the recent lives and achievements of William Dixon, Tom Price, John Cross, Charlie Edensaw, Isaac Chapman, and others of the same native school. All of them were contemporaries of our own Constable, Turner, Courbet, Millet, Gauguin, and Cézanne. Their splendid isolation, beyond the barrier of the Rockies, at the edge of the Pacific, is all that has safeguarded their originality and independence during the all-too-brief span of the last hundred years (1820–1940).



## SKIDEGATE MASTERS

### THE SLATECHUCK CREEK QUARRY OF ARGILLITE (1820- )

#### THE CONNEHAW LINEAGE FROM THE NORTHWEST (1785- )

After 1785, when the white seafolk began to cast anchor in the harbours for the barter of sea-otter pelts, the Connehaw more than any other Haida chiefs began to impart a fateful turn to the arts and activities of their own people. In the hectic period that followed, their names often appear in the journals of the sea-captains engaged in the fur trade with them and the heads of other coastal tribes in the North Pacific.

As the Sea-Otter was much sought for its valuable pelt, it was gradually driven from its rookeries and threatened with extinction. It was about 1820 that the northwestern hunters, so far located at Kyusta on Langara or North Island and at Frederick Island, moved to other sites on the islands—the Edensaws to Tow Hill and Rosespit, to the northeast; and the Connehaws down the west coast to the Skidegate channel and eastward to Skidegate Harbour, where they developed as scrimshanders and carvers of argillite for the curio business.

First, it is interesting to read what the sea-captains in their voyages, journals, or log-books had to say about the Haida chiefs known under the name of Connehaw.

John Meares, in his *Voyages made in the year 1788 and 1789 from China to the Northwest Coast of America* (London, 1790), has written:

“... Several Haida canoes came alongside the ship, and having purchased their stock of furs, Captain Douglas got under way... They dropped the bower anchor... two miles from a small barren rocky island, which happened to prove the residence of a chief, named Blakow-Connehaw... He came immediately on board, and welcomed the arrival of the ship with a song, to which two hundred of his people formed a chorus of the most pleasing melody. When the voices ceased, he paid Captain Douglas the compliment of exchanging names with him, after the manner of the chiefs of Sandwich Islands...”

“Such is the first account of these Indians by the Whites,” according to G. M. Dawson.<sup>1</sup> “They themselves also preserve some traditions of the meeting. On asking the Chief Edensaw (It-in-sa) if he knew the first white man whom the Haidas had seen, he gave me, after thinking a moment, the name of Douglas, very well pronounced. Edensaw is now chief of the Ya-tza village, west of Virago Sound, the Kung village at Virago Sound, over which he formerly presided, being nearly abandoned for the new site. Ten years or more ago, his village was on the south side of Parry Passage, but this has now been altogether given up, and the houses are rapidly crumbling away. There is little doubt that the chief with whom Captain Douglas is said to have exchanged names was a predecessor of

<sup>1</sup> Report of the Queen Charlotte Islands, by G. M. Dawson, 1878. *Geological Survey of Canada*. 1880. Pp.160B, 161B.



Edensaw's, bearing, as is customary, the same name. This, with the prefix Blakow is given as Coneehaw by Douglas, and it is due to the fact of the ceremonial exchange of names having taken place that that of Douglas has been handed down to the present Edensaw."

The Journal kept by William Sturgis [Ship *Eliza*, Capt. Rowan. MS. 1799]<sup>1</sup> contains extensive information of the same chief "Cunneaw" and his tribe, as follows (in extracts):

"[They were] first discovered by Captain Douglas . . . Cunneaw and Altatsee [present-day Yæhl-tatsee] . . . had each a village . . . The tribe of Cunneaw at North Island, 3000 fighting men . . . In their village, [there are] some tolerable well built cottages . . . Cow [another Haida Chief, of the Kaiganeë tribe to the north] slept on board. The natives are easy to trade with . . . They are at present in alliance with the tribe of Cunneaws at North Island . . . Their brother Skittikitts . . . Altatsee led me towards the house . . . About 40 people, men and women and children, [were] seated round an enormous fire . . . in the middle of the house . . . Some [were] employed making fish hooks for halibut, some . . . [making] bowls . . . Two images [seen] at a short distance . . . which Altatsee told me were intended to represent two chiefs that were his relations or rather they were his ancestors for they looked as if they were upwards of a hundred years of age, that had been killed in battle (Pp. 21, 22) . . . The village of Keustah [Kyusta], two miles from Cloak Bay . . . A large chest before the fire for me to sit upon . . . The Old Man . . . calls himself Douglas or Cunneaw or 'Douglas Cunneaw' . . . Cunneaw is I believe the oldest of the coast . . . most respected . . . Early in the morning, [I] examined the village and houses, of which Cunneaw's was the largest, 50 feet long, 30 broad, and 15 to the rise of the roof to the peak . . . ; a number of wood structures [grave posts] with the bodies of their dead chiefs . . . on which were carved the figures of men and children . . . A pillar by the side of Cunneaw's house, on top of which was a figure intended to represent a bear. The figure and pillar were both red with ochres. The teeth, eyes, nostrils, and the inside of the ears (which were stuck forward) were made of mother of pearl shell; which gave it a beautiful appearance; in comparison to what the Northwest generally has. Skittikits [Skidegate] is a son of Altatsee. I wanted to take him to Boston. His father would not consent."

William Sturgis is no less explicit in his somewhat earlier MS. *Journal and Remarks on a voyage towards the North West of America Commenced Aug. 1798 kept by—on board ship Eliza. James Rowan, Commander.*<sup>2</sup> In the chapter entitled "William Sturgis—Lectures dealing with his Voyages / Given by the daughter of Edward W. Hooper," June 11, 1930, he wrote:

"The Publication of Cook's Voyage in 1785 gave the great impulse to the N.W. fur trade . . . Trade articles described (p. 12). Capricious fancy of a barbarous people . . . in the earliest trade [for] bar iron, of which the natives made a sort of adze or chisel; beads, buttons . . . sheet copper [which until then had] reached them through the Chilcat tribe [Tlingit] . . . Among the tribes upon the Queen Charlotte islands and the adjacent coast . . . the trade was in great measure entrusted to the woman . . . Keener traders I have never met with . . ."

<sup>1</sup> Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*



Chapter 2: "*Customs and traits of the Indians*," in the same manuscript: "The ornaments are fanciful: Ear pendants, bracelets, chains for the neck . . . beads, pieces of copper or brass . . . their most precious, from the central part of a shell, is the haliotis [abalone], which is found upon the coast of California. They are very particular in selecting these shells . . . They in both sexes paint themselves . . . Various pigments found in their Country . . . We carried a large supply of red lead and Chinese vermilion . . . The favourite colours [were] black, white, and different shades of red . . . Toilet: nose jewell—pieces of shell suspended or fastened to the nose . . . a natural Wampum, called by them Hyqua, thrust through the grist of the nose, or polished wood which the sailors facetiously called their 'splitsail yard'. The 'wooden Lip' [labret] usually worn by the women of all tribes, from the south end of the Queen Charlotte islands to Prince William Sound . . . (Pp. 11-12). Wooden masks representing a perfect facsimile of a woman's face with the wooden lip. This was carved by the Indians, who are quite skilful in making a likeness of whatever they attempt to imitate, such as large birds, the heads of animals . . . I have often noticed these masks among them, and brought home several . . . I have seen these wooden lips 3 inches long and 2 broad in the widest place (p. 12).

"Madame Cunneaw [Connehaw], the wife of one of the most distinguished chiefs . . . the enormous size of her wooden lip . . . She was the keenest of the traders. She professed great regard for the white people. 'All white men are my children' . . . She was usually known by the cognomen of 'Mother' Connear . . . Old Connear had the reputation of being the greatest orator of his day . . . also a warrior . . . [of] uncommon stature . . . Keow was the principal chief of the Kigarnee [northern Haida, of the Prince of Wales Island], a place much frequented by trading vessels. Keow [was] most intelligent . . . his insatiable curiosity . . . He would pass several days at a time on board my ship."

### GEORGE GUNYA, THE FLUTE CARVER

(c. 1850)

The early decades of the 1800's passed, and we find the Connehaws finally established at Skidegate. In a later generation, their head-chief was called George Gunya (the same name recorded phonetically).

The first printed mention of him as a flute carver, without an explicit reference to his name, is in Francis Poole's *Queen Charlotte Islands* . . . London (1862), as follows:

"The Skid-a-gates impressed me so favourably in general that I regretted nothing so much as to have to quit Queen Charlotte Islands without visiting the tribe in their home. They showed me beautifully wrought articles of their own design and make, and amongst them some flutes manufactured from an unctuous blue slate. I bought one for five dollars. It was well worth the price. The two ends were inlaid with lead, giving the idea of a fine silver mounting. Two of the keys perfectly represented frogs in a sitting posture, the eyes being picked out with burnished lead. A more admirable sample of native workmanship I never saw. It would have done credit to a European modeller."



Two of Gunya's flutes (one now preserved at the Museum of the American Indian in New York) were collected in Vancouver in 1861; another was received at the British Museum in 1863.

George Gunya, or perhaps his Connehaw uncle before him, must have been much impressed with the various tools, contrivances, and instruments of the white traders on board ship. No doubt a sea-captain played the flute before him, and he admired the white man's gifts and superiority. He went back home and tried his hand at the same achievement. Making his own flute and playing it seemed to have become his ambition. His keen observation and natural skill surmounted all difficulties. Soon he produced all sorts of curios for the trade, among them ornate tobacco pipes, plates, and dishes as for the high table of foreigners; figurines and statuettes, and possibly slate mirrors, as recorded by G. T. Emmons but attributed by the latter to the Tsimshian. The smoothly polished surface of these mirrors was licked for use or smeared with grease, or again, they were dipped in clear water to obtain good reflection. Above all, Gunya fashioned flutes and Pan pipes on which he used to play tunes to his heart's satisfaction.

What materials could be used for such carvings was a question that found its own answer in the course of time—yellow and red cedar at first. Since there were no hard woods on the Island, Gunya used bone, whale's teeth, grizzly-bear molars, and walrus tusks. The natural resources of the country provided another medium: blue or dark slate; we now call it argillite. White prospectors, looking everywhere for copper and coal in the 1820's, are reported to have found an argillite bed on a mountain slope up Slatechuck Creek in the vicinity of Skidegate. George Gunya was the native owner of this area. It was his habit to work closely with the white adventurers; his uncles had done likewise with the fur traders. Soon he was certain that argillite could be worked like hard wood, and more easily than bone and ivory. So he carved a flute and a Pan pipe. To cap it all, he had the patience to learn how to play the flute.

His own specialty turned out to be producing flutes, beautifully decorated with floral and leaf designs. Frogs and eagles stood in high relief on the stems, which he embellished with inlaid pewter.

G. M. Dawson, the geologist, examined the argillite deposit about 1878, and reported on it:<sup>1</sup>

"Many small streams flow into Skidegate Inlet but none deserving to be called rivers. The most considerable is that which has been called the Slate Chuck on the chart. It reaches the inlet about a mile north of Anchor Cove, coming from a wide and low valley which runs north-westward into the mountain range, and is nearly parallel to that occupied by Long Arm. Slate Chuck Brook is so called from the fact, mentioned by Mr. Richardson, that from a quarry a few miles up its course the Indians obtain the dark shaly material from which they make carvings. The Indians now appear to know little about the upper part of the Slate Chuck but say that it comes from a large lake, from the other end of which (or near it) flows a stream which reaches the head of Masset Inlet. In former years this route was occasionally used, part of the distance being accom-

<sup>1</sup> Loc. cit., p. 80B.





1. Argillite flute; pewter inlays, by George Gunya (Mus. Amer. Indian, N. Y.)

plished in canoe and part on foot through the woods. Of late years it is supposed to have become impassable from windfall due to fires."

"The carved stone models of posts," Dawson adds elsewhere,<sup>1</sup> "made by the Skidegate Haidas from the rock of Slate Chuck Creek are generally good representations of the *Kerhen* (Several of these are figured by J. G. Swan . . .). Plates, flutes, and other carvings made from the same stone, though evincing in their manufacture some skill and ingenuity, have been produced merely by the demand for such things as curiosities by whites."

Flutes and Pan pipes by George Gunya must have been fairly numerous at one time. Many of them are to be found in public museums, as follows:

A collection by "Lady Franklyn in 1861," in Vancouver, included a flute. It is now preserved at the Museum of the American Indian (Heye Museum) in New York. Inlaid with pewter, it is embellished with the figure of the Eagle lying on his back near the mouthpiece, and three Frogs facing the player, between the four key holes. The pattern covering the space between the Frogs is geometrical and floral (Photo by M.B. 87225. 16" long. N.M. C. 2/9790. No. 1).

Another flute with similar decoration—Eagle and three Frogs facing the Eagle, also inlaid with pewter—belongs to the British Museum in London. It was obtained on the Queen Charlotte Islands in February 1863 and later presented to the Museum by Professor Rupert Jones (9119, 7685/2. 19½" long. Cf. *Haida Myths*. No. 35).

A third flute, more elaborate and longer still, was found broken into three parts, in Montreal (?), and mended at the National Museum of Canada. Six key holes, in groups of three, between the Frogs, increase the scale here (Photo by N.M.C. Cf. *Haida Myths*. No. 36.)

A fourth flute conforms to the same pattern, also with six key holes like the last; one of the Frogs has been broken off and is lost (probably at the American Museum of Natural History, New York. No. 2).

A fifth flute, at the Alaska Historical Library and Museum at Juneau, Alaska, is of a different pattern. Instead of the Eagle and the Frogs, the Salmon fills the wide space between six key holes which are separated into two groups. This odd spacing of the holes shows that no familiar tune could be played on this instrument. A medicine-man with a round rattle, an *ambelan* apron, and a conical head-dress, rests on his back on the Salmon; he is presumably meant to be inside the Salmon. This Salmon and medicine-man illustrate the myth of "Swallowed, like Jonah, by the Fish" (Cf. *Haida Myths*. Pp. 338-368). Picked up in 1905 by Captain Berry at Los Angeles or elsewhere in California, this flute was acquired afterwards by

<sup>1</sup> Loc. cit., pp. 148B, 149B.





2. Flute (Am. Mus. Nat. Hist., N. Y.)



3. Eagle and Frog flute (U.B.C., Vancouver)

Axel Rasmussen, and later by the Juneau Museum ( $20\frac{1}{2}$ " long. Photo by M.B. 102079. Cf. *Haida Myths*. No. 285).

Another flute of a different pattern belongs to the museum of the University of British Columbia. Its decoration consists of two Frogs, in lower relief than in the first flutes above, and the Eagle, whose head and tail are of ivory or bone, as is also the outer rim of the flute. Close to the mouthpiece, a most amusing person, on his back, throws his mouth wide open to serve as a hole. The six key holes here are evenly spaced, presumably to produce a familiar scale (No. 87355. No. 3).

Two wooden whistles, used by the North Pacific Coast nations in their spirit (*narhnorh*) functions of secret societies, belong to the Provincial Museum at Victoria, B.C. Although they are said to have been found at Blunden Harbour in the Kwakiutl country to the south, they undoubtedly are Haida pieces from the hands of George Gunya. The little man next to the mouthpiece, with his mouth open to produce resonance, is similar to the one in the flute described immediately above. And likewise, one Frog instead of three, on one of the two whistles, accompanies the man of the mouthpiece (Photo 102567. No. 4).

Whistling contrivances of the same type were described by G. M. Dawson,<sup>1</sup> as follows:

"A peculiar and very ingenious speaking doll was obtained at Skidegate. This did not seem to be a mere toy but was looked upon as a thing of worth, and had previously been used, in all probability, as an impressive mystery. It consisted of a small wooden head,  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches high by  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches wide and 2 inches deep from back to front, composed of two pieces of wood hollowed till quite thin, and the front one carved to represent a

<sup>1</sup> Loc. cit., pp. 140B, 141B.



4. Wooden whistles for secret societies (Prov. Mus., Victoria) →



5. Thunderbird and Frog flute (Univ. Museum, Cambridge, England) ←



grotesque face, with a large round open mouth and projecting lips. The two wooden pieces had then been neatly joined, a narrow slit only remaining within the neck, and serving for the passage of air, which then impinging on a sharp edge at the back of the cavity representing the mouth, makes a hollow whistling sound. To the neck is tied the orifice of a bladder, which is filled with some loose elastic substance, probably coarse grass or bark. On squeezing the bladder sharply in the hand a note is produced, and on relaxing the pressure the air runs back silently, enabling the sound to be made as frequently as desired."

Found in the collections of the University Museum of Archæology and Ethnology, Cambridge, England, is an argillite flute of the first plastic quality, with six stops, from George Gunya's hands. Three Frogs decorate the stem, and the Thunderbird at the lower end is crowned with the upper half of a halo (like a Greek Orthodox saint). (Photo recently communicated by the curator, Dr. Bushnell. "E 1900, 5 . L. Allis... 17" long, No. 5).





6. Pan pipe of argillite (R. C. W. Lett's coll., Vancouver)

A Pan pipe of argillite or mouth organ with seven holes set in the backs of two Eagles, in Mr. R.C.W. Lett's private collection at Vancouver, is a unique musical instrument. It is said to have been dug up on the Queen Charlotte Islands, "so old" it is believed to be. Yet, from the way it is carved, it can safely be attributed to George Gunya (three-quarters natural size. Photo by M.B. 78657. No. 6).

George Gunya, the flute carver, had not yet entirely faded out of memory when the author consulted some of the old people who had known him before he died, about 1880. His daughter, old Mrs. Susan Gray, of Skidegate (in 1947), spoke of him in the following terms:

"My father was an Eagle; he used to own Slatechuck creek, and he had a large smoke house for fish. My mother planted a garden on the creek near the shore. And, when I was a little girl, we used to live there. No one but my father's old friends in Skidegate were allowed to come and get slate; and they did not have to pay for it. But the others, from Massett and from the villages to the south, had to buy it. As Charlie Edensaw's sisters belonged to Skidegate, he was like one of our own people. His uncle, Old Edensaw, whose name was Tarharhegen or Tarhegen, sometimes came to Slatechuck creek from behind, through Yagan lake. But he had far to go, and no other tried it."

Henry Young concluded with the remark: "When I was a boy, the carvers made lots of flutes and smoking pipes."

A few other flutes in argillite are to be found elsewhere; for instance, in Dr. E. L. Ross's collection at the Ninette Sanatorium, Ninette, Manitoba; they had been obtained about 1860 ( $21\frac{3}{4}$ " long). And the painter Emily Carr owned another, which she may have tried to play in her pipe dreams of totems.



## PLATE AND DISH MAKERS (1860-1920)

**Plate and Dish Makers** (*Taoge*): William Dixon, Gitsihlalarhlate ("Father of George Smith") from Tsahl, George Young, Moses Mackay, John Robison, Ed. Collison ("Peter Kelley's father"), Joshua Work, William Russ, and others.

William Dixon's medium of self-expression in argillite was not limited to high reliefs and statuettes of medicine-men and chiefs. A large dish by him has recently come to our attention; it surpasses all his other achievements, with the single exception of his group of shamans, spirit helpers, and patients, at the National Museum of Canada.

This oval dish (now in the National Museum collection) represents, in high and low relief, the Octopus inside, at one end, and other figures, mostly from mythology. The head of the Octopus, very small in nature, is much enlarged; near the end of the dish it is brought out with a hooked bill and with eyes of inlaid abalone shell. The tentacles are bunched and drawn together upward. The broad rim around the oval dish is decorated with ivory or bone inlays in the form of a number of salmon. The design, the execution, and the polish in this beautiful example of the Skidegate master's art, reach an apex of perfection in the arts of the North Pacific Coast (*No. 7*).

A round plate (*qaite*) of argillite with the Shark (*Sqao*) design was acknowledged as the work of George Young, an Eagle clansman, one of the leading carvers in the decades preceding the turn of the century. 'Captain' Brown stated that he had seen him carve it; it was Young's own crest and was tattooed on his body. The face of the Shark is in low relief and shows the characteristic three gills on the cheeks and the domed head, as well as the two round holes beside the gills on the head. The rest of the body—fins and one-sided tail—is engraved all over the remaining space inside the dish; it is split decoratively in half. The low relief, the engraving, and the cross-hatching filling the interstices are as smooth as any of the best engravings of other island craftsmen. This masterpiece was bought at an auction sale in Seattle by Walter C. Waters of Wrangell, Alaska, who disposed of it to Alex Rasmussen, also of Wrangell, Alaska. It has since been acquired by the Sheldon Jackson Museum at Sitka (Photo by Axel Rasmussen. *No. 8*).

Two other admirable round plates in the Axel Rasmussen collection, also surely like the work of William Dixon, again represent the Octopus in high relief. In the first of these plates, both of similar size and style, presumably made at the same time, the Octopus spreads his tentacles from the centre to the rim, which is adorned with small bone inlays. Between the tentacles eight small human faces display an amazing variety of traits and distortions. Four or five of them have their mouths open, as if chanting an incantation, as in Dixon's above-mentioned shaman group. The noses of most of them are twisted a bit to one side, as if to avoid cold symmetry and to suggest pain or effort. The eyes of one or two are closed—for a vision? The hair of each is brushed or designed differently; a few have





7. Octopus plate of argillite (a Montreal coll.)



hair that resembles feathers. One human sucks the tip of a tentacle; another bites the soft edge of the Octopus's membranes. The shape of each head and the expression of each face are drawn with a naturalness and humour that suggest caricature of real subjects (Rasmussen's photo. *No. 9*).

The second plate of the pair shows the Octopus in much the same style, but without the human faces between the tentacles. Bone inlays are introduced in their stead, and eyes, ears, and fins are in linear form.

Many other round and oval plates of argillite, with engraved decoration inside, are in private and public collections. They go back for their models and inspiration to Chinese and European prototypes, the knowledge of which was introduced on the North Pacific Coast by the early explorers, traders, and whalers. The natives were so observant (their chiefs tarried on board ship and had many opportunities to borrow ideas for their own use) that influences were bound to seep into the curio crafts of the native artisans. A significant indication of that trend is noticeable in the earliest plates of the Wilkes collection (1835-1840) at the U.S. National Museum, Washington, and elsewhere, particularly in the earliest materials at the National Museum of Canada. The round plates and cups, and the knives and forks, are



8. Round plate with Shark  
(Rasmussen coll., Sitka Museum)



9. Octopus plate (Rasmussen coll., Sitka Museum)



entirely of foreign inspiration; they are adorned with floral, leaf, and geometrical patterns, usually compass-drawn. Slowly native talent and inventiveness emerged from the chrysalis of childish imitations.

The following round and oval plates with engraved designs and crests cannot, with certitude, be ascribed to definite carvers, most of whom belong to Skidegate. Although the best opinion, that of their present-day elders (1939, 1947), has been obtained, they are not entirely in agreement on the identity of the makers.

The Shark, a crest of the Eagles at Skidegate, appears several times on plates and dishes of excellent craftsmanship. In one of these, the compass-drawn circle has left a tiny axis hole in the centre, and a circle in the centre is left blank. The face and head of the Shark are a bit flattened in the broadside margin, and the stylized body, fins, and tail fill the rest. The ribbon-like rim of the plate is decorated with dented triangles of bone inlays (not shown).

A round plate in the Axel Rasmussen collection, from Wrangell, Alaska, shows the Shark (or Skate ?) differently (It is now in the Sheldon Jackson Museum at Sitka). Here the domed and gilled head of the sea monster is next to the ribbon border; the body is spread out across the plate in the centre, and the one-sided tail turns back upon the tapering body. The fins fill out much of the space on both sides, and linear scratchings instead of cross-hatching cover the rest (*No. 10*).

A smoothly engraved oval dish in Canon J. E. Rushbrook's collection at Prince Rupert (in 1947) also represents the Shark with gills, round



10. Other Shark plate (Rasmussen coll.)



11. Shark in oval plate  
(Detroit Institute of Arts)





breathing holes, small protruding tongue, and other stylistic devices. Here the broad rim is ornamented all around with eyes, fins, ears, and feathers. ( $14\frac{1}{2}'' \times 7\frac{1}{2}'' \times 1\frac{1}{2}''$ . Bought about 1906 at Port Essington, when the Haida, in the spring, brought over their supplies for winter. Photos 102035, 102036. Not shown).

The Shark with gills and a protruding tongue is once more displayed in an excellent oval plate, at the Detroit Institute of Arts. Here the body is split in half and spread out alongside the rim; the dorsal fins are turned inside; the halves join up at the tail at the opposite end ( $12\frac{1}{4}'' \times 18\frac{3}{4}'' \times 1\frac{1}{2}''$ . Photo by M.B. 27265. No. 11).

The Killer-Whale, the Wasco, the Sea-Bear, and Sea-Wolf reappear a number of times in beautifully engraved round or oval plates in various museums and private collections (especially in the American Museum of Natural History and in the U.S. National Museum), as follows:

The Killer-Whale fills the whole space within a round plate. At the joints, eyes, ears, and teeth decorate in stylized abstractions the body of the sea monster (No. 12).

In an oval plate of exquisite workmanship, the Killer-Whale with its fins elongated is shown in circular form which allows enough space for a broad face at one end. Two smaller animal faces are set in the body under a linear spine. Godroons line up the inner border of the ribbon-like rim (No. 13).

Two sea monsters of the Whale (*Sqana*) and Wasco variety in the Rasmussen collection at the Sheldon Jackson Museum at Sitka, Alaska, fill the interior of two fine round plates with their stylized heads, bodies, fins, and tails. One of these is also ornamented with inlaid bone and a border rope design. The other is marked in the middle with a compass hole, and an open space is left in the centre (Photo by Rasmussen. Not shown).



12. Killer-Whale round plate



13. Oval plate with Killer-Whale





14. Wasco plate  
(Detroit Institute of Arts)



15. Two Wascos in round plate  
(U.S. Nat. Museum, Washington)

The Wasco with legs, a bushy tail like the Sea-Wolf's, and sharp pointed teeth occurs in another round plate of the Rasmussen collection at the Sheldon Jackson Museum, Sitka, Alaska (Photo by Rasmussen. Not shown).

The Wasco, Killer-Whale-like, with two perforated dorsal fins, reappears inside a fine round plate at the Detroit Institute of Arts (Photo by M.B. 216-2 in 1950. *No. 14*).

Two Wascos, each with legs and clawed feet and two perforated dorsal fins, face each other, head to tail, in an exquisite round plate in the collection of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington. This specimen was obtained from James G. Swan in 1883. The cross-hatching in the wider-than-usual space here is a perfect example of engraving on slate or silver. Pointilism appears on the bodies (Photo by U.S.N.M. 5,293. *No. 15*).

The sea monster Wasco, of the Killer-Whale variety, with stylized parts—head, fins, tail—again decorates two exquisitely engraved oval plates; the rim of one of these is set with diamond-shaped bone inlays (*No. 16*).

Two plates—one of them oval, the other oblong with pointed ends—reproduce the Halibut and the Dogfish. They are part of the Michael Ash collection at the Cranbrook Institute, Michigan. The Halibut is in high relief on a background of patterned eyes, fins, and ears. The Dogfish itself is engraved, with the head at one end displaying a double row of fierce looking teeth (The Halibut dish: 14" x 7 $\frac{1}{4}$ " x 7". *No. 85*. Purchased at the Hudson's Bay Company Store at Seattle. The Dogfish: 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ " x 6 $\frac{1}{4}$ " x 7", purchased at the same place. Photo by M.B. 213-5 in 1950. *No. 17*).



An oval dish of good quality shows an unusual Dogfish, whose head alone fills much of the space. Its short spine is represented behind the head, and the fins are tipped with claws. The rim inside is decorated with a rope design, and the flat space outside is decorated with linear blocks of short lines (Not shown).

A plate with a high-relief centre depicts the Halibut on a background of patterned eyes, ears, and feathers, in the collection of the National Museum of Canada (N.M.C. Photo 94255. No. 18).

The Wolf with four legs and paws decorates a rectangular plate. The tail of this quadruped is turned back on the belly. The background consists of two engraved birds with bills, feathers, and talons. This association of the Wolf and a bird no doubt is an allusion to the maker's crests. The border has an engraved pattern with inlaid opercula (No. 19).

An elaborate oval plate contains the head and fore-legs of the Grizzly Bear in high relief on an engraved background, suggesting the Killer-Whale (Not shown).

An oval plate of moderate size, smoothly engraved, shows the head and claws of the Grizzly Bear, in the manner of Joshua Work. Its border is decorated with opercula shells (Not shown).

The concave surface of a remarkable plate of oblong shape with rounded corners, at the American Museum of Natural History, New York, is covered with a tapestry consisting of current patterns: eyes, fins, claws,



16. Wasco in two oval plates



17. Halibut and Dogfish in oval plates  
(Cranbrook Institute)





18. Halibut oval plate (National Museum of Canada)

feathers, ears, mouth and teeth, breathing holes. This significant achievement has been attributed to John Robison, originally from Cape Ball, by his fellow-carver Henry Young (A.M.N.H., No. T22712. Photo by M.B. 89385. *No. 20*).

From sheer realism in the interpretation of animal and human forms, North Pacific Coast art in this instance has gone beyond its intermediate phase of symbolism mostly by way of simplification. Its tendency to ornate the whole surface of objects of varied shapes has led the artisans to dissociate parts of their patterns from their moorings and to utilize them separately in a tapestry-like spread. Yet the medley here suggested the Wasco crest to a Skidegate elder to whom its photograph was shown.

The above-mentioned Robison plate is a good example in point. Chilkat blankets, in the medium of weaving meaningless patterns, illustrate the same development. Living forms and even simplified symbols have finally boiled down to graphic-like decoration. This is wholly original and is typical of North Pacific Coast art in its final stage.

A round plate in the W. Weatherill collection illustrates the same abstractions. The circular field in the centre is marked by the lathe and the chuck gear (a white man's tool); it is divided in half from side to side. The pattern consists, as in the Robison plate above, of claws, fins, feathers, eyes, breathing holes, and faces showing teeth, on a background of cross-hatching and engraved lines. Opercula shells in pairs are inlaid on a ribbon-like border (Acquired 1905. 233551 and 34724-a.  $13\frac{3}{4}''$  x  $1\frac{1}{4}''$ . *No. 21*).



An oval plate in the collection of the American Museum of Natural History, New York, is of the same type, with the exception of the circle and star in the centre, in a field surrounded by engraved godroons (16.1/2329. Not shown).

Another oval plate in the Lipsett collection at Vancouver, B.C., seems, at first sight, to present abstract patterns derived from eyes and feathers alone, to which is added a rosace within a circle. But on closer inspection, it turns out to be the representation of the Raven, whose head and bill are buttressed by his wings and tail and on whose head is placed a halo; bone inlays complete the ornamentation. It was attributed to Tom Price of Skidegate by some of his Skidegate contemporaries (17" x 10". 87315, 87316. Not shown).

The Grizzly Bear is the theme used in an oval plate of exceptional refinement, probably



19. Wolf plate



20. Oblong plate with stylistic patterns (Am. Mus. Nat. Hist., N.Y.)





21. Plate with stylistic patterns. (W. Weatherill coll.)

by a Massett carver. It was photographed at the Dominion Gallery, Montreal. The wide central band is occupied by the Grizzly, whose face covers one-third of the space; the other two-thirds accommodate the body of the Bear spread out in halves on both sides. The Killer-Whale fills a narrower space below, and a row of saw-teeth decorates the margin above. Bone inlays for the eyes and joints, and four diamonds on the border complete the decoration (Photo by Dominion Gallery, Montreal. *No. 22*).

An octagonal dish with bevelled corners is lavishly adorned to cover the whole field to the point of overloading. Here the Raven with outspread wings bites the back of the Frog, and heads, faces, and flippers of two Whales cover the wide border and ends (*No. 23*).

A round plate of strange design at the Pitt-Rivers Museum, Oxford, is filled with embossed-like naturalistic figures of the Bullhead and the





22. Grizzly and Killer-Whale in oval plate (Dominion Gallery, Montreal)



23. Raven and Frog plate

Halibut. Lack of the usual restraint here makes one wonder about its source, probably foreign. A row of five small human faces are squeezed beneath the jaw of the Bullhead, and other small figures as fillers in other parts can be discerned (Purchased in 1926 from Stevens. 13". Photo by M.B. 84-3,4, 1953. Not shown).



## BOWL SCULPTORS

From the earliest days to almost the present, craftsmen of several Indian nations on the North Pacific Coast have made bowls, dishes, plates, and ladles out of wood, horn or bone, stone, and argillite. In some instances, the models for these useful vessels and curios were no doubt traditional and native, or they derived more or less from ancestral Siberian forms. In other instances, they were borrowed from Chinese crockery or European tableware, often seen on board ship.

A considerable number of specimens seen and recorded in public and private collections will presently tell the tale of their diverse origins and speedy evolution, mostly after 1830, at the hands of Haida and other craftsmen.

The design in a large wooden bowl, oblong and painted black, resembles a dug-out canoe in the shape of a lumpy seal, with head forward, and flippers behind like a rudder. The Grizzly Bear is a figurehead at the prow of a white man's whaler. The other figure at the back is a man in squatting position, his head thrown back and his hands clasping the outstretched flippers of the seal. The bowl is cut deeply from the top into the body of the amphibian (Not shown).



24. Top view of wooden bowl of Beaver  
(Pitt-Rivers Museum, Oxford)

An interesting oval bowl showing the Beaver fashioned out of wood is decorated with the rodent's head and forepaws and with a human figure, face upward, at the opposite end. Now in the collection of the Pitt-Rivers Museum of Oxford, it is said to have been "found in an Indian burial ground at Maple Bank, Esquimalt, Vancouver. Rev. W. Warner Perry. Transfer Univ. Mus. 1886." (5" x 11½" x 6". Photo 88-8,9, in 1953. No. 24).

A Duck dish and a Frog dish, both of wood (the bird is engraved and partly painted), belong to the British Museum. The Frog is part of the Sandiman collection (Frog: 220. 18,V,77. 11½" long. Photo by M.B. 78-3, 1953. Duck: NWC 10. 9½" x 5" x 4½". Same Photo. No. 25).

A small dish representing the Raven with inlaid abalone



eyes, called "coupe du Corbeau", is at Musée de l'Homme in Paris. Its label reads: "Indiens Haida. M.H. 47,47,1. Coll. Fénéon. Bibl. Catalogue de la Vente de la Coll. Fénéon. Paris, Hotel Drouot, 1947." ( $4\frac{1}{2}$ " x 7" x 13" long. Photo by M.B. 108-1 in 1953. No. 26).

Two wooden bowls at the British Museum, London, depict human beings. In the first, a human being is lying on his stomach; the face is at one end of the deep oval bowl, which is cut into his back, and his legs are at the opposite end, thrown upwards. The flat rim of this grease bowl is decorated with opercula shells. In the second, the human being lying on his back frames a deep square bowl. The long arms and elongated hands extend along the sides of the bowl and reach the bent legs, the feet of which have been broken off. These are two excellent pieces, among the earliest here (Dish to right: NMC 9.

10" x  $5\frac{1}{2}$ " x  $2\frac{1}{2}$ ". To left: "1949/AM 22/98/1002."  $9\frac{1}{2}$ " x 7" x  $4\frac{1}{2}$ ". Photos by M.B. 78-8,9 in 1953. Nos. 27, 28).



25. Duck and Frog wooden dishes (British Museum)



26. The Raven dish (Musée de l'Homme, Paris)





27. Two wooden dishes (British Museum)



28. Same dishes as 27

In one of two splendid horn bowls in the private collection of Sir Alfred Bosson in London, England, the Beaver is depicted with his incisors, and in the other the Thunderbird with his hooked bill. The horn seems to be of the mountain sheep of the northern Rockies inland; or it may be a buffalo horn, as these were brought from the Prairies for the West Coast carvers by the Hudson's Bay Company, which established a post at Port Simpson in 1834 (One: 8" x 4½" x 5"; the other, 7½". Photos by M.B. 92A-8,9 in 1953. No. 29).



29. Horn bowls representing Beaver and Thunderbird (Sir Alfred Bosson's coll.)

A unique horn ladle in the Paul Rabut private collection in Westport, Connecticut, represents Nanasemgyet, in the myth of this name, holding on with both hands to the dorsal fin of the Whale, which is carrying him down to the lower world under the sea. The eyes and teeth of the hero as well as the eyes of the Whale are





30. Engraved horn ladles (Am. Mus. Nat. Hist., N.Y.)



inlaid with copper and abalone shell (Rabut's No. 10A. 23" long; width of bowl, 6". Photo by the owner. Not shown). Mr. Rabut described it as follows: The top half is made of sheets of copper riveted together; the back is flat, and the front has been hammered out to represent the various figures. Actually the top half is one piece, the body another, and the small bird which is inserted in the stomach is still another piece. The top figure, though human-like in appearance, has curious fingers. All these details are engraved on the surface. The bottom head could be a whale (no blowhole) or a bear, since it has a mouthful of teeth (top row only) and big round nostrils.

A fine Museum collection of mountain-sheep (or buffalo?) horn ladles and of mountain-goat horn handles for spoons is displayed in a photograph at the American Museum of Natural History, New York. On these can be recognized the stylizations of the Skidegate masters in the 1850-1880 decades. (Jesup, J. R. Swanton, Vol. V, Haida. Plate XIX. Photo by N.M.C. J 2549. No. 30).

The British Museum, London, also possesses two wooden bowls, one of which is typically one of the best of its kind, i.e. the Raven grease dish. It is decorated at one end with the Raven's head, on which is shown the small face of the Hummingbird, the Raven's companion during the Creation of the World. The opposite end of the oval dish is ornamented with the Thunderbird and his hooked bill. The Thunderbird is repeated under the bill of the Raven. The bird-like ornamentation of the other oval dish, is meant for the Duck, with a flat bill at one end, the feathered tail upturned at the opposite end, and the wings along the sides (Raven: 1009. 1949/AM 22,100. 12" x 6" x 5". Duck: NMC 10. 9½" x 5" x 4½". Photos by M.B. 78-4,5 in 1953. Nos. 31, 32).

A large argillite dish in oval form, representing the Grizzly Bear with a long muzzle, is also at the British Museum, London. The inlaid border of



31. Raven grease dish (British Museum)



the bowl and the teeth are of whale bone; the eyes are of abalone shell. Inside, smoothly engraved godroons reinforce the rim pattern. The label on it reads as follows: "The property of the Rt. Hon. The Earl of Dartmouth, P.C. removed from Woodside Hall, nr. Haddersfield." (15" x 8" x 6". Photo by M.B. 80-11,12, in 1953. No. 33).

Perhaps the earliest argillite bowl, in oval form, belongs to the National Museum of Canada. It was collected on the Nass River in 1879 by Powell. At one end, the unidentified frog-like face with round eyes is augmented by a small person, resting face upward on the mythical monster's face, his hands reaching down to the large mouth beneath him. The

tail at the opposite end may serve as a handle. The smaller argillite dish of the Frog with abalone eyes, although collected among the Tsimshian, is also Haida (5½" x 3" x 1⅞". VII-B-1363. VII-C-434. Photo by N.M.C. 88937, 88940. Nos. 34, 35).



32. Raven and Duck grease dishes (British Museum)



33. Argillite dish showing Grizzly (British Museum)





34. Frog-like argillite dish (Nat. Mus. Can.)



35. Same as 34 and smaller Frog dish (Nat. Mus. Can.)



36. Raven bowl of argillite  
(McGill Univ. Mus.)

One of the finest argillite bowls, in the G. M. Dawson collection (circa 1880-1885) at the McGill University Museum, portrays the Eagle (or the Raven?), whose head is at one end of the oval cavity; his tail, opposite, is decorated with the face and bill of another bird (mortised or glued on?), perhaps



the Woodpecker. The feather and wing ornamentation on the sides, and the rope design inside the border call to mind the work of Charlie Edensaw and the technique of a silversmith. It may be from his hands (*No. 36*).

Two wooden grease bowls, of the same exquisite quality, presumably carved by Charlie Edensaw, formerly at the McGill University Museum, now at the Art Association of Montreal, are decorated, the first with the Eagle (or Raven?) and the Thunderbird, the second with the Beaver and the Thunderbird. The border inlays are of opercula, and the eyes of abalone. The second bowl was the gift of the Canadian Handicrafts Guild in 1926. The Guild had received it as a present from the Edensaw family. These and the previous argillite bowl are no doubt by the same carver — Charlie Edensaw — at this moment of his career nearly the best of the Haida, in the 1870's–1890's ( $7\frac{1}{2}''$  x  $3\frac{7}{8}''$ . Photos 89214, 89215. *Nos. 37, 38*).



37. Raven and Thunderbird wooden bowl  
(Montreal Art Association)



38. Beaver and Thunderbird grease bowl  
(same coll. as 37)

A shallow bowl of argillite in the shape of the Sea-Lion, beautifully carved and engraved, may be ascribed to Joshua Work, Yæhlnoo, or to Tom Price. The engraving of the Five-finned Whale inside the dish is, by itself, incomplete as an interpretation of the Whale. But the addition of an exquisitely-drawn smaller Whale between the jaw and the fin, and of a canoe with a hunter inside and the Eagle at the prow, makes it another illustration of the myth of Qagwaai or Stone-Ribs. In the story, Strong-Man went out to sea and speared Whales and Sea-Lions before he started on his epic voyage round the islands to destroy sea monsters; eventually he became the pillar of the islands, like Hercules or Atlas carrying the World on his shoulders. Opercula shells decorate the rim of the bowl, and pear-like engravings partly fill the space between the shells (Cf. *Haida Myths*. Pp. 314-326. Not shown).

A Shark dish at the Art Institute of Detroit, Michigan, is oblong. It is decorated at both ends with the face of the Shark twice repeated, with its three gills on its cheeks. Opercula links them along the broad rim on both sides of the small dish cavity ( $18\frac{3}{4}''$  x  $12\frac{1}{4}''$  x  $1\frac{1}{2}''$ . No. 27265, called "City Purchase." Photo 216-4 in 1950. Not shown).



## JOSHUA WORK (YÆHLNAO), AND HIS BOWLS

Argillite or wooden bowls carved by Yæhlhao, otherwise called Joshua Work, belong to later decades. He died in the 1930's in his seventies. Though born and trained at Skidegate, this skilful Haida craftsman chose to reside at Port Simpson in the Tsimshyan country on the mainland to be closer to the white traders, his prospective customers. One of his compatriots, Amos Watson, moved out to Kitkatla among the coast Tsimshyan, apparently for the same reason. At Port Simpson, Joshua Work adopted and raised Luke Watson, a white child left by his parents. Watson grew up as an Indian and became a good carver and canoe maker (Cf. pp. 147-150).

One might be at a loss to attribute to Joshua Work any sample of his work were it not for the splendid Frog oval bowl collected by the author at Kispayaks in 1920. This was definitely ascribed to him by its Gitksan owner, Richard Morrison. It is of red alder, and the eyes are abalone inlays. Previous to 1920, Joshua Work had paid a visit to Richard Morrison and while there, had made the bowl for his host as a token of thanks. The style and originality of the Frog dish enables us to recognize other bowls by him, which are found in various collections (20" long x 11" wide x 7" high. Photo by N.M.C. 10,343). (Cf. *Haida Myths*, No. 12).

Much alike in treatment, although in argillite, another oval bowl depicting the Beaver differs only in the foremost part characterizing the rodent chewing his familiar poplar stick; here it is inlaid with abalone shell. The eyes are of the same pearl. But the rounded teeth seem to be of bone—the front incisors have been lost (At the National Museum of Canada. Photog. Div. 89,375. No. 39).

Quite similar in essentials and of superb workmanship, another oval argillite bowl represents the Beaver, with insets of abalone for the eyes, the incisors, and the stick (In the Paul Rabut collection of Westport, Con-



39. Argillite bowl of Beaver (Nat. Mus. Can.)





40. Beaver bowl (Nat. Mus. Can.)

[necticut. It was acquired from the estate of an old and wealthy family.  $11\frac{1}{2}''$  x  $6\frac{7}{8}''$  x  $3\frac{3}{4}''$ . Collector's photo. No. 2A, 2B. Not shown).

One more Beaver bowl of argillite by Joshua Work belongs to the collection of the National Museum of Canada. It is somewhat more elaborate than the other pieces, four ears and two *skyil* pillars of four cylinders each having been added at the top. The eyes, the shoulder joints, and the ends of the poplar stick have abalone inlays. The long rounded incisors rather remind one of the Tanu or Kloo Beavers (Photo. N.M.C. 89376. No. 40).

41. Beaver and Frog bowl  
(Walter C. Waters coll.)





42. Frog dish

The Beaver of the oval argillite bowl in the Walter C. Waters collection at Wrangell, Alaska (in 1939), is of a somewhat different style because of the absence of the poplar stick and of the inward slope of its face and incisors. Otherwise it belongs to the same shop. The small argillite dish (above) with the Frog, on whose head are three cylinders, may also be by Yæhlnao (Photo. 87645. No. 41).



Presumably by the same artisan is the square dish with two Frogs croaking to each other, carved out of red cedar, collected in 1915 by the author at Port Simpson, where Joshua Work resided. It is a free-hand reproduction of a dish about thirty inches long which had been used in the feasts of the past generation (Cf. *Haida Myths*. No. 13. 12" long x 7½" wide x 3½" deep. Photo N.M.C. 77028).

Another Frog dish, this one in argillite, seems to belong to the Yæhlhao set. It is oval like most of the others, but shorter (No. 42).

A smaller Frog dish, seemingly unfinished, is by the same carver, no doubt (Not shown).

Three small wooden dishes in the City Museum of Vancouver (photos of only two shown) represent the Beaver and the Frog. They are from different hands. The bottom one in the photo seems to be the oldest, with its opercula shells and its inlaid eyes of bone. The one at the top is to be attributed to Joshua Work or Yæhlhao (Photo 87262. No. 43).



43. Beaver and Frog dishes  
(Vancouver City Museum)

### TOM PRICE, FROM NINSTINTS

(c. 1850–1929)

Tom Price turned to the carving and engraving of oval and round plates and dishes, in which he excelled. Yet he produced not a few totem poles and elaborate pieces, like the Spencer box in Vancouver. At least one of his pieces was signed *Tom*.

Price and Cross were contemporaries at Skidegate, and both belonged to the Eagle phratry, if not to the same clan. They probably were members of the family of "Gitkun and his brother Geneskels—carver and tattooer," mentioned by James G. Swan in 1874 (*Smithsonian Contributions to Knowledge*, XXI, p. 5). Gitkun bore the same name as his noted Tsimyan kinsman of the Skeena River canyon, Githawn—Salmon-Eater, one of the two chief leaders of the Eagle among the Tsimyan, and the rival of the famous Legyærh. When the list of Eagle craftsmen among the Haida is considered, it becomes clear that the plastic arts, like the incentive for invasion, warfare, and conquest, were the Eagles' born endowment wherever they established themselves.

According to Alfred Adams (Price's junior), who disposed of some of his work for him, Tom Price died at a Prince Rupert hospital in 1928 or





44. Sculpin and Eagle plate (Lipsett-Ryan Coll., Vancouver)

1929 at an age between 70 and 75. Born in the 1850's he is now described as having been the stepfather of the Rev. Peter Kelly, a noted Haida present-day missionary in British Columbia, the last survivor of the Thunderbird clan of Skidegate (in the Killer-Whale phratry). Because of the rule of exogamy, Price must have belonged to an Eagle clan in order to marry a Thunderbird, as he did! And this is corroborated by his choice of Eagle crests in his carvings: the Eagle, the Sculpin or Bullhead, the Shark, the Five-finned Whale, the Soo'san and Wasco totems, the Black Whale, and the Beaver. If he occasionally used the Bear, as Edensaw and John Cross were doing, it must have been with their permission.

The quality of Tom Price's work in his own special field of plate engraving was unsurpassed, even by Charlie Edensaw. In his high reliefs, he was on a par with John Cross, perhaps superior to him. The Spencer box, if actually by him rather than by Cross, is a piece of virtuosity in a class by itself.

Like some of his fellow craftsmen, Price had been a boat-builder and had made a living by it at one time. He also engraved silver and gold. On a visit to Massett he often carved silver spoons in the Chinese style. For instance, he presented gold bracelets and ear-rings of his own make to the Adams family. With John Cross, his contemporary, he spent the winters in Victoria, carving argillite and silver for white customers.<sup>1</sup>

Of the many plates definitely attributed to him, the most remarkable for their engraving and personal touch are those showing the Sculpin and the Five-finned Whale.

The Sculpin and Eagle plate, oval and almost pointed at the ends, in the Lipsett-Ryan collection at Vancouver, was ascribed to Price by Adams. It was purchased in the last thirty-five or forty years. As the engraving

<sup>1</sup> In the records of the Indian Agency at Massett, a letter dated Skidegate, February 3, 1916, was written by Tom Price. His handwriting looks shaky. In this letter, he thanks Mr. Gibson for having appointed him village constable. And he requests a "paper": "just setting forth an expression of your confidence in me."



lacks the steadiness of line of the earlier specimens, it must have been made in the carver's later years. The birds in relief at both ends are Eagles with folded wings, and the crest covering the concave part of the plate is Qual or the Sculpin, a spiky fish with a large head, locally called the Bullhead. The Sculpin is a secondary crest of some Eagle clans. The triangular inlays round the rim are of polished bone imported from Alaska (according to Adams), and the eyes and nostrils are set with abalone shells (No. 44).



45. Sculpin plates (Axel Rasmussen coll.)

In two plates photographed by the late Axel Rasmussen (at Wrangell, Alaska), the Sculpin crest (*Qayæh*) is shown at its best—it ranks among the finest engravings and all-over decorations in North Pacific Coast art. The ugly Sculpin is here stylized with a large curved mouth and face, and occupies much of the space; sharp spikes on the head and the back, and several fins, fill out what is left of the surface. The inner spaces are shaded with delicate cross-hatching showing experienced burin work, such as used in silver and gold engraving. The whole design is so well conceived and executed that it conveys the impression of an exquisite piece of inlay work, or again of a fine pattern for tapestry. And its wave-like effect, spreading from the centre face and firmly unified in spite of its diversity, is rhythmical and fascinating. The bone inlays round the flat border are similar to those in the first specimen, but much fewer. One of these plates was acquired by Rasmussen from Richard Cecil, and Old Eagle chief of Gitsalas, the canyon village on the Skeena. It must have been made for him by Tom Price (the owner attributed one of the two plates to John Cross) as a gift to a kinsman, several decades past, when the engraver was at his best ( $14\frac{7}{8}''$  by  $8\frac{5}{8}''$ ; below,  $15''$  x  $8\frac{1}{8}''$ . No. 45).

The Five-finned Whale, a crest of the Eagles, is the central design in a large plate by Tom Price in his best period. This plate in the Rasmussen collection at Wrangell, Alaska, was bought in a Ketchikan shop. It had been made by the carver for the late Mr. Deasy, the Indian agent at



Masset, and remained in his possession for a number of years (Cf. *Haida Myths*. No. 277). A dug-out canoe with three paddlers, surrounded by human and animal figures, fills out the whole space within the concave plate. The Eagle, perched on the head of the Whale, his wings spread out, is trying to catch the Halibut. A dug-out canoe, under the Whale, holds three people, two with paddles and one with a bow. Behind the canoe, a human being is laced up as within an Indian cradle board, and in front of the canoe a hunter handles a bow and arrow. Inside the body of the Whale we see a second Halibut. Fin or ear patterns occupy the empty spaces, triangular inlays of polished bone decorate the flat circular rim of the plate, and a few oval insertions of abalone shell emphasize the eye, nostril, and rib patterns in the sea monster. Cross-hatching provides the shading for a background. Here we have, definitely identified by Alfred Adams and otherwise recognizable, a typical specimen of Price's work and an outstanding example of North Pacific Coast art.

This exquisite plate decoration is an illustration of the legend of Stone-Ribs or Qagawai, reported by Dr. Swanton (*Bureau of American Ethnology*, "Haida Texts and Myths," Bull. 29, pp. 195-200), and once published by Alfred Adams in *The Daily Province*, in Vancouver. The Stone-Ribs legend may be summed up as follows:

As Stone-Ribs was going round an island hunting for birds, he heard someone weeping. A woman's voice called for help, but his mother warned him not to pay any attention to the wailing, yet he boldly started in the direction of the voice. This was the beginning of his fantastic adventures. At sea, he came upon the Eagle trying to catch the Halibut. He captured the Halibut with his own hands, and as he was splitting it, lightning and thunder came out of its body. It was a supernatural fish, on whose sides "there were stripes of copper." He skinned the Halibut and put the skin on his own body [In this there is a marked resemblance to the Gwaiskun or Soo'san myth of the northern Haidas, already familiar].

Stone-Ribs then acquired magical powers. Bullheads (sculpins) shot away from him. He acquired two magical coats besides: a copper coat and a marten-skin coat, which gave him great powers as a sea-hunter. As he donned them, his body swelled to large proportions. He became a sea monster, like a Whale, with five dorsal fins, and he kept shifting from one spirit garment to the other. Now his skin clothing had five fins upon it; then it was his halibut skin.

His mother owned a canoe, and she finished arrows for him. They went out together to sea in the canoe to hunt birds and to get shellfish. He made the motion of handling his bow. Then they met with stormy weather and landed at the town of Qagawai, where he met a young woman of whom he became very fond [presumably the one whose wailing he had heard].

As he walked out to her father's lodge, he put on his copper coat; over this, his marten-skin coat; and over both, his Qagawai skin coat with five fins, and went around the west coast wearing them. The supernatural beings living there opened their doors to him. One day, wearing his five-finned coat, he entered the Tsahl Inlet, as a bow-man there was making guesses at him: I wonder whether he who they say has been travelling around the west coast has passed this point...

Dr. Swanton's version of the legend obviously is a Skidegate variant of the northern Haida story of Gwaiskun and his Soo'san costume, of the young sea-hunter deceiving his conceited mother-in-law. These versions were derived from the older myths of the mainland, which recount ancestral adventures during the southward migrations of the Fugitive Eagles: the episode of the Tongas Narrows for the Tsimshian, in which Gunas or Man-of-the-Sea captured the Bullhead and came across the supernatural Eagle-Halibut; and the Tlingit myth of Konakadet.





46. Wasco plate (Collison coll.)

Widely known and illustrated as this myth is among the three northern nations of the Pacific Coast, none of their native artists appropriated its theme so extensively as did Tom Price in the engraved plate of the Rasmussen collection.<sup>1</sup> Other carvers presented the young sea-hunter in the round or in high relief, holding the sea monster in his arms or tearing it asunder, or the monster itself carrying whales in his mouth, on his tail, or on his back; or again, they showed his mother-in-law shaking rattles in her hands and chanting incantations. The Eagle, the Halibut, and the hunter appeared individually as crests on totem poles. But nowhere do we find so much of the story illustrated in a small space as Tom Price succeeded in doing in this unique plate. Here we see, combined in a complex pattern, the Five-finned Whale, the Eagle in flight, two Halibuts, the Canoe with two paddlers, and the hunter with a bow, and again the hunter, in one place laced up in his copper armour and in another place standing in his marten coat and holding his bow and arrow ready to shoot at the deep sea monsters.

In the story recorded by Dr. Swanton, the allusion to the southern Haida village of Tsahl, referring implicitly to the carvings of Tom Price and John Cross, shows that these contemporaries were closely related. Cross had originally come from Tsahl, where the Five-finned Whale was first seen; and Tom Price, presumably of the same clan, had made himself the foremost upholder of this crest in the plastic art of his people.

Wasco, the sea monster with the features of a Killer-Whale predominant, is engraved with all possible embellishments in another beautiful plate in oval form but with pointed ends. It was part of the Collison collection at Prince Rupert in 1939 and was attributed to Tom Price by both the owner and Alfred Adams. Here the monster's teeth are in the form of three pointed feathers. Shell insets of abalone, in oval, circular, crescent, and diamond forms, decorate the dish in an all-over pattern, even round the rim, where engraved designs are cleverly spread out (*No. 46*).

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Haida Myths*, No. 277.





47. Large Wasco plate (Nat. Mus. Can.)





48. Killer-Whale or Wasco (Nat. Mus. Can.)





49. Killer-Whales (Nat. Mus. Can.)



A large Wasco plate at the National Museum of Canada, collected in 1885 by Dawson, is also to be attributed to Tom Price. The Wasco here is an amphibious monster with four legs, a tail, and the fins of a whale. His legs and front teeth belong to the wolf prototype, and his long claws are curved. But his tail, instead of being bushy and curled back as in the previous examples, is wide and fan-shaped, like those of a sea mammal, although not so thick-set as that of the whale. Here, as in the following examples, it is long, flexible, and ribbon-like ( $16\frac{1}{8}'' \times 10\frac{3}{8}''$ . No. 47).

The mixed origins of Wasco or Sea-Wolf have led Tom Price to waver between its woodland and sea features, often stressing one at the expense of the other. Now the monster is a plain quadruped from the forests, and he flourishes his hairy tail; now it assumes amphibian attributes, retaining his four legs alongside the fins and fan-like tail of a whale. Often it becomes a fantastic mammal of the sea, similar to the Killer-Whale of the opposite Raven phratry.

Wasco would be wholly the Killer-Whale in the largest oval plate at the National Museum of Canada, were the perforated dorsal fin included. But it is not, and the omission presumably was intentional. A carver belonging to an Eagle clan, like Price, had the right to use the Wasco crest, but not the Killer-Whale crest. This plate, also collected by Dawson in 1885, shows Wasco under the garb of the Whale without a dorsal fin. The teeth are still saw-like and the ear is raised, but the legs and the long tail have vanished; the tail of the Whale, bending back and opening up into a fan, tapers down to a ribbon ( $21\frac{1}{4}''$  by  $13\frac{1}{2}''$ . No. 48).

An almost similar Whale with a long slender tail bent back, saw-teeth, a long perforated dorsal fin, and a blow-hole in the form of a crescent, decorates the second largest oval plate in the National Museum collection, also collected by Dawson in 1885. A smaller Whale fills the space between the head and the tail of the larger Whale. This single smaller Whale stands for the usual pair associated with Wasco ( $18\frac{3}{8}''$  by  $11\frac{1}{2}''$ . No. 49).

Another Wasco, under disguise as it were, and without the Wolf's legs, almost fills a large round plate, also in the Dawson collection at the National Museum ( $8\frac{7}{8}''$ . Not shown).

The engraving and treatment of the Wasco or Whale in a semi-oval dish, the border of which is decorated with opercula, are almost similar to those shown in Nos. 45 and 46. But here another theme is introduced, that of Stone-Ribs,<sup>1</sup> as the Raven is shown inside the monster of the sea.

Not a few other plates engraved with the Wasco and the Whale crests, at the American Museum of Natural History in New York, and elsewhere, were probably the work of Tom Price; for he was nearly the sole contributor of this specialty. One of these plates shows Wasco in the shape of a Whale with



50. Whale with Raven inside

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Haida Myths*, pp. 314-326 (No. 50).





51. Wasco, sea monster  
(Am. Mus. Nat. Hist.).

dorsal fin and the tail of a shark ( $10\frac{3}{4}''$  x  $5''$ ). Acquired in 1938 from the estate of V. J. Evans. *No. 51*).

Another specimen of the same description is at the National Museum of Canada. On its base a Chinese Ying-Yan (swastica) is deeply engraved, as on some of the earliest plates (Collected by G. M. Dawson, *c.* 1885).

The catalogue of the American Museum of Natural History mentions three plates with the Orca and the Whale designs, also a "modern fish" design; two plates with the Skate or Shark; and one with the Bear. These were collected by J. W. Powell in the

late 1870's (the Powell collection of the National Museum of Canada is dated 1879) (*Nos. 52, 53*). (The third plate, not shown, is at the U.S. National Museum, Washington.)

A carved dish collected by the late C. F. Newcombe at Skidegate in 1913, now at the Provincial Museum at Victoria, is also decorated with a sea monster, presumably Wasco or the Whale ( $10\frac{1}{2}''$  x  $5\frac{3}{4}''$ . Specimen No. 1496. Not shown.)

The same Wasco with a large head retains the legs and the hairy tail of the Wolf, also his saw-teeth and stiff ears, in a round plate at the Sheldon Jackson Museum, Sitka, Alaska.

In two other round plates at the same museum, Wasco, in the first, retains his two dorsal fins but is without his legs, and instead of his wolf tail has a shark's. A disk-like space in the middle of the plate is left free, except for the lathe hole in the centre. The Eagle plate in oval form, also by the same craftsman, has an unpatterned centre. In the second, there is nothing left of the Wolf but the sharp teeth. The tail is the Killer-Whale's, but the absence of the Killer's perforated dorsal fin indicates an intentional omission by the carver. It was obtained from the Tlingit minor chief Jake Jackson of Wrangell, who died some years ago ( $16\frac{1}{8}''$  x  $10\frac{1}{4}''$ . Not shown).

Another large plate in circular form, at the National Museum of Canada, is decorated with the Whale design. In this instance, two Whales in stylized and abbreviated form, deeply cut, face each other and interlock. These also may be ascribed to Price ( $14\frac{1}{4}''$ . Part of the Aaronson collection; exact date unrecorded. Not shown).





52. Whale engraving (Am. Mus. Nat. Hist.)

Engraved designs in three argillite plates consist of the Thunderbird and the Whale. The first, on an oval plate at the National Museum of Canada, is among the most lively characterizations of the mythic animal. It is evidently from the hand of Tom Price (For a detailed description cf. *Haida Myths*, pp. 209-210, No. 165).

The Thunderbird and Whale in the second plate, although differently conceived, were undoubtedly engraved by the same artist (For a description cf. *Haida Myths*, p. 210, No. 166).

The Thunderbird, possibly by Tom Price, occurs again on a small dish at the Provincial Museum in Victoria. It was found while excavations in the James Bay district, near Victoria, were being made and was presented to the Museum by J. C. Lower in 1912 ( $3\frac{3}{4}$ ". No. 1497. Not shown).



Two slate dishes, forming part of the Powell collection at the American Museum of Natural History, New York, may also represent the Thunderbird, although the catalogue describes their design as being the Sparrow Hawk and the American Eagle (16-604 and 609. Not shown).

Some later carvers, including Chapman the cripple and Andrew Brown of Massett, have, like Tom Price, taken advantage of the downfall of custom and annexed the Thunderbird and the Black Whale to their repertoires. These crests were not the property of their Eagle phratry but belonged to the Ravens.

The Sculpin (like the Wasco, the Dogfish, the Eagle, and the Halibut) was the crest of the Eagle-of-Skidegate's clan, and Tom Price in his own right engraved it deeply on two large plates, at the American Museum of Natural History and the National Museum of Canada. These examples of Haida art rely on nature only for a starting point, in a compact all-over decoration. As a crest, the Sculpin here might remain unrecognizable. The



53. Whale design (Am. Mus. Nat. Hist.)





54. Sculpin plate (Am. Mus. Nat. Hist.)



55. Sculpin or Dogfish design

wide face at one end of the concave oval represents the head of this spiny fish of the northern seas, with its large greedy mouth showing teeth; the slender split shaft at the opposite end represents the tail. These are the main features of the Sculpin pattern. The square in the centre is meant for the short body, and the eyes, teeth, ears, feathers, and fins are familiar space-filling devices (18"x12". From the undated Aaronson and other collections. Nos. 54, 55.)

A third Sculpin 'platter' is listed among the specimens at the Washington State Museum as having been collected by Captain Jemmett at Skidegate (1880-81; 1-10753. Not shown).

The engraving on an almost similar plate at the National Museum of Canada might at first sight be taken to represent the Skate. Yet it may have been meant for the Sculpin or Bullhead, because of the two curved spikes on its very large head (15". Aaronson collection).

A seal, on a domino-like background with checker lines and dots, furnishes the theme for the decoration of an oval plate, presumably from the hands of Tom Price in his earlier years. It was collected by Dawson in 1885 for the National Museum of Canada. The broad face at one end shows a double row of blunt teeth, tiny pitted nostrils, and large eyes made of concentric lines. A stubby tail spreads out at the opposite end. Between head and tail along the lumpy body, the spine is marked by three circles and feather-like projections. An unusual feature of this plate occurs on the reverse side. Here a simple pattern round the sides consists of old-fashioned circles in double lines made with compasses, joined together by an en-





56. Oval plate with Eagle design (Nat. Mus. Can.)



graved line and encased on the outer side by two lines which encircle the plate ( $14\frac{1}{8}$ " long by  $9\frac{1}{4}$ ". VII-B-759. Not shown).

The Eagle was the leading crest of all the members of the Eagle or Thunderbird phratry. It was not considered the special privilege of the higher Eagle clans. For this reason the leaders at Massett preferred the Beaver; those of Skidegate preferred Wasco. Only once do we find the Eagle engraved on a large oval plate. This plate, presumably from the hands of Tom Price, is one of the finest examples of engraving in argillite and not often equalled in native art. Used to great advantage, the Eagle motif is spread out symmetrically on the side band round the centre. His head fills one end, and his tail the other; the wings are spread out, and the talons appear in profile. The Eagle's face consists of two eyes with circular contours and inner fillings. The eyebrows begin in the centre over small arched nostrils, and circle over the eyes and around the head until they reach the lower part of the face and end up with the stubby bill, which is bent down. The wing and tail motifs are no less elaborate, with their typical eye centres, eyebrows, feathers, and stems, and perfectly smooth line-work and cross-hatching for the fillings. Here, the tail consists of a semi-human mask with a crown of three short feathers, a form occasionally seen. Every part of the bird is stylized into a flat pattern. Only the talons are realistic ( $16$ " x  $12$ " x  $2$ ". N.M.C. Undated Aaronson collection. No. 56).

The whole surface in one of the finest engraved dishes, presumably by Tom Price, at the National Museum of Canada, is covered with the stylized Sculpin, the stiff tail at one end establishing its identity. It is divided into



57. Same engraving as on 56





58. Eagle and Halibut  
(U.S. Nat. Mus., Washington)

thirds: the head with a duplicate above it, the small body with fins on the sides, and the lower part with the straight tail. The border inside is godrooned; square bone inlays and lines fill the surface; the edge of the rim is a rope border (*No. 57*).

A large oval plate at the U.S. National Museum, Washington, is plainly Tom Price's work. The Eagle with folded wings in high relief at the centre of the plate lies on the Halibut. The eyes, ears, and fins in the engraved background are merely stylistic ( $16\frac{1}{2}''$  x  $10''$ . Photo No. 34722-G. *No. 58*).

Two round plates, collected in 1884 at Skidegate by J. G. Swan for the U.S. National Museum, Washington, are among the most elaborate ever achieved. They are remarkable examples of art and technique. The talent of Tom Price for this kind of work is once more recognizable here, in his high

reliefs pinned and glued to the surface. His engraved backgrounds and rope decoration around the border are suitable. The Eagles in the two plates are of the same type as those of the Eagle-Halibut and the Eagle-Sculpin plates above. The four Bears on the inner and outer sides of one plate (illustrated) are in the same spirit. The two Bears inside are semi-human; the head alone is that of the animal. The heads of the Eagles and the Bears, as in the plates described elsewhere, are all slightly tilted to one side—a quirk of the maker ( $14\frac{1}{2}''$  diam.,  $2''$  deep.  $18\frac{1}{4}''$  diam.,  $1\frac{3}{4}''$  deep. *No. 59*).

The eye, ear, fin, and circle engravings, inside and under the first plate, are juxtaposed rather than connected, in spite of the double circular and dented lines between them. They serve merely as fillings. Their hesitancy, as it were, makes us realize that Price had not yet reached the full maturity of his art. In 1884—this plate may have been made a bit earlier—he was not thirty years of age. Yet the large plate, secured in the same year, is much more advanced in the sweep of its composition. Obviously Price had benefited by the experience gained in the first. The background of the second shows the Eagle and the Shark compressed, side by side. The curved bill of the Eagle is next to the one-sided tail of the fish. The same crests are repeated in the raised figures. The two Eagles, opposite each other, pinned and glued to the surface, were carved out of an unusual





59. Grizzlies and Eagles (U.S. Nat. Mus. Washington)





60. Shark-Woman and two Eagles (U.S. Nat. Mus., Washington)

variety of argillite, or as it is expressed at the U.S. National Museum, it was "made of quite different stone, greyish and with pure white streaks."

The figure of Shark-Woman occupying the centre of the second plate is a unique performance for Tom Price. The face with the three gills and dots on the vaulted forehead and the ridge-like labret in the lower lip are symbolic of the Shark totem; they are similar to those on the totem poles of the same carver. Yet the nude figure with the stylized breasts seldom occurs in Haida art. The fact that lathe work is here noticeable, particularly in these two plates, shows that the Haida craftsmen in the early 1880's were well equipped with the steel tools (*No. 60*).

Tom Price, like his contemporaries, at times illustrated episodes in the Creation myth in his plate engravings. The Eagle and Salmon, the Beaver and Salmon, and the Frog Dzellarhons episodes, for instance, figure in some of his carvings. The Salmon, like the Sun, was stolen by the Raven from its Beaver owner in the beginning, for the benefit of the people. This story is summarized in James Deans' "The Hidery story of Creation" (*The American Antiquarian*, March, 1895).





61. Salmon in high relief

Having learned that Tsing, the Beaver, kept the Salmon in a mountain lake where no one else could find it, the Raven flew away from the islands to the mountains and, once more, turned himself into a little boy. He wandered around the Beaver's house, at the head of a river, and the old chief, seeing him, made him welcome. As time passed he adopted him as his own son, for he was fond of him; the child was so wise and skilful.

The Beaver and his adopted son, one day, partook together of a fine dish—the red salmon from cold waters. To the boy who marvelled about this find, the old chief did not mind revealing his secret. The lake and the river flowing from it teemed with salmon which, every season, provided an ample supply. As the young son was very helpful, the Beaver chief brought him along to the lake and, growing quite confident after a while, he sent him alone to fish salmon. The young fisherman failed to return. Having gathered all the salmon he could in his bill and between his claws, he flew away to other lakes and other rivers and dropped a few fish here and there for them to multiply and be useful to all. Old Tsing no longer was the only one to enjoy his possession.

A number of argillite plates in the Deasy collection may be attributed to Tom Price (Cf. Photograph by Clyde Patch, of Ottawa, in 1919). The pointed plate near the centre in this photograph is decorated by the Eagle with outspread wings. The Eagle is partly raised and partly engraved, and the Wolf head stands just above an engraving of the Two-finned Wasco. The composition and the execution of this design are the result of experience, as this plate must have been collected by the Indian Agent. Another slightly pointed dish shows the Shark at one end in full form, with the Woman covering the belly; fins and eyes fill the remainder of the space on the sides of the fish (Not shown here).

The Salmon, realistic and slightly raised on an engraved background of two Killer-Whales meant for Wasco, lies at full length inside an oval plate, which is on a par with the others in quality (*No. 61*).





62. Sea monster Wasco (Nat. Mus. Can.)

On three more oval plates, we find the Skate totem, quite comparable to the other Skate dishes at the National Museum of Canada, already ascribed to Tom Price. Their stylization here is effective and compact, although differently treated. The figure is placed crosswise in the plate, instead of lengthwise.

One of the most elaborate Wascos is engraved in the centre area on an oval plate (at the National Museum of Canada). The monster with a large head, toward one end of the plate, displays three claws in a forepaw and raises a hairy tail. A small Whale lies on his head between his ears, and another small one lies under his jaw. The playful and easy arrangement of the figures reveals once more the talent of the engraver (13'' x 9'' x 2''. Photo 89387. No. 62).

The largest argillite plate known, also presumably by Price, was in a private collection at Philadelphia and may now belong to the University of Pennsylvania. The Salmon with a crooked snout is spread out here, in full, at the bottom of a large oval plate, which is about 25 inches long and weighs 33 pounds (Not shown).

A small plate in the Deasy collection (not shown), in semi-oval and capricious form, presents a human figure on top of a flat fish, probably the Halibut, with tail turned back. Its low relief opens the door to interesting identifications. The little man here tilts his head, raises his left hand to his mouth on the opposite side, and brings his right knee forward. The flat fish engraved in the space all around is the Sculpin or Bullhead, with spikes in the form of pointed feathers.

Of the three small remaining plates in the same collection, presumably also by Tom Price, the larger oval one contains three slender fish lengthwise



in low relief. Quite realistic, they are sensitively treated. The smaller plate repeats the Wasco design with a large head and long dotted spine, smoothly engraved. And the square dish, an exceptional form, holds a flat fish, presumably the Halibut, and the foremost half of another fish, perhaps the Salmon (Not shown).

Obviously by the same maker, the Shark totem on an oval plate at the Sheldon Jackson Museum at Sitka, Alaska (photographed by Rasmussen), shows similar qualities of treatment. The flat face of the monster, with a large dented and cone-like mouth and with gills on the cheeks and forehead, occupies one end of the plate; its oval eyes are set with polished bone. The body is split lengthwise and spread out on either side of the plate, rejoining at the other end in a double tail dotted with eyes. A smooth band of godroons inside the flat rim shows once more the maker's habit of silver engraving (Not shown).

Although two Sculpin plates at the National Museum of Canada share the same qualities, the Sculpin in the round one is in a simpler form and fills the circle. The line and incision work is not so perfect, nor the border so elaborate. Like the early Chinese models for round plates, this one has a foot, and in the centre is seen the pin hole mark of a trade compass (15" x 2½" deep).

Another plate of the same type with the Sculpin design in Walter C. Waters' collection at Wrangell is inferior to the others in quality and engraving; for this reason it may be considered an apprentice piece or the product of the carver's latest years when his hand and sight were failing him.

As two food trays, made from larger wooden models, are decorated at the ends and on the sloping sides with the Sculpin pattern, they remind us of Price's style and may be traced to him. The larger one shows an unsteady hand, perhaps done in his later years or by one of his nephews under his guidance. The smaller of the two is of superior craftsmanship and presumably by him. Its border is adorned with oval bone insertions (Sheldon Jackson Museum at Sitka, Alaska. Photo by Axel Rasmussen).

A specialist in the making and engraving of plates, Tom Price nevertheless yielded at times in the early 1880's to the new fashion of carving totem poles. Some fine specimens are to be credited to him, perhaps all of these but one in the collection of the National Museum of Canada.

Two of these totems represent Shark-Woman, already seen in high relief on plates, here with her labret extending like a ridge down to a smaller human face below. This ridge forms part of the nose of the lower figure and connects it to the chin of the semi-human Shark. The three gills of the Shark totem are engraved on the cheeks and on the domed forehead. The Eagle at the top of one of these poles, on whose head rests the small head of the Bear, resembles that of several plates where he stands similarly, his wings folded and his bill almost straight. Price seldom made the Eagle's bill crooked, as we find it in the treatment by other craftsmen. His Eagle is a mild creature, sometimes rather pathetic. Only rarely is he fierce like the Thunderbird. The Grizzly Bear, stiffly reproduced here by permission of his father's clan, sits erect, elbows resting upon knees, arms raised and hands forward. The row of engraved circles on the oval base, connected by



intercrossing double lines, filled with cross-hatching, would suffice in itself to identify Tom Price's technique. Besides, it is signed "Tom," behind the base. The argillite in this pole is of a greyish tint, almost like saponite (19½" high. Cf. No. 91, "Crests and stylized animals . . ." p. 72).

Were it not marked "Tom" and had it not been collected by J. W. Powell no later than 1879, we might doubt the identity of the carver, who was born presumably in the late 1850's. At his death, about 1928, perhaps he was slightly older than he seemed to be. This would make him about 25 when he carved the Shark totem poles. These productions reveal a mature craftsmanship at a time when totem poles were only coming into favour.

The second totem pole of the above-mentioned pair at the National Museum of Canada, of the same date and collection, shows two Sharks at its centre. Substituted for the Eagle is a sitting human figure, with hands, one above the other, turned toward the chest, and a conical hat with four cylinders. The dignity of this figure, with a wide, thick mouth, broad nostrils, and downcast eyes, is impressive. It may have been made from direct observation. How interesting it would be now to compare the portrait with the native original and judge the extent of the stylization! The Grizzly Bear sitting at the base of the pole is more realistic than in the previous pole. Here his head is bent down, and his human hands support the line of his long muzzle, which is also turned downward. The base of the pole, carved out of the same block as the shaft, is different from the oval, engraved, and mortised base of the first pole. The carvers of 1879 were still wavering in their choice of a standard in this technical aspect (22½" high—one of the tallest. Dull polish).

The portrait of the same chief, quite recognizable, presumably of Skidegate, is placed at the top of another pole in the National Museum of Canada, collected by Powell in 1879. On his head, however, the conical hat has only three cylinders, a feature showing that the number of cylinders in "skyil" hats may vary. The bird under him, combining a human face and knees, with feathered body and wings, holds up the halo around the head of the Bear—a crest apparently borrowed from the Gitksan of the upper Skeena River. This carving of the crest is possibly the best in its brief existence, another example of it being on an actual totem pole of the Gitksan village of Kispayaks. The Beaver sitting at the base of the argillite pole, displays powerful incisors but lacks his poplar stick. His wide tail, upraised between his elbows and knees, is made up of an energetic human face—perhaps another portrait—and a checkered dome over its forehead (18¼" high. Cf. No. 86).

Another pole in the Powell collection at the National Museum of Canada is attributed to the same artist; it was carved out of the greyish argillite used in a few of the specimens (Cf. *Haida Myths*, No. 140. P. 169).

Two more poles illustrating the Wasco and Soo'san crests complete the small set of argillite poles from the hands of Price. The first is in the Rev. Mr. Raley's private collection in Vancouver and was identified by Alfred Adams as being a good piece by Tom Price. The mother-in-law, at the top, her dress coming down below her knees, wears the head-dress of a medicine-woman. She holds in her hands, behind her back, the peculiar



rattles of her magical arts with which she conjures the monsters from the deep. A small Whale rests, crosswise, behind her legs. Under her, Wasco, head down and bear-like, with a short tail turned up, carries two Whales across his back. The Beaver, sitting at the base of the pole, gnaws at a poplar stick, and the human face on his tail is so life-like, with a strong aquiline nose, that it suggests an actual portrait. This piece may be attributed to the carver's later years as its figures are somewhat different; it was collected presumably two decades later than the Powell specimens (Cf. *Haida Myths*. No. 281).

A remarkable variant of the same illustration of the mother-in-law and Soo'san crest by Tom Price occurs in one of the finest poles at the National Museum of Canada in the undated Aaronson collection. Its base is quite similar in type to those in the Powell collection (1879); we may infer that the date of the work is almost the same. As it was tentatively attributed by Adams to John Cross, we are reminded how similar at times was the work of both kinsmen (17" high. Cf. *Haida Myths*. No. 280).

The mother-in-law, standing at the top of this pole, is like the one in the Raley pole. She wears the same kind of conical head-dress, this time showing a little of her hair underneath. In her hands, now brought forward, she shakes the same pair of circular rattles, singing all the while. Her ornamented skirt and *ambelan* reach down to her ankles. The Eagle, below, carrying in his talons the finned Whale crosswise, turns his head sharply sideways, as he flies. The Whale at the base, with wide fins sideways and tail turned upward, is another sea monster captured by the Eagle, who was the son-in-law in disguise.

In the decoration of his many plates, Tom Price shows how fine was his technique of silver and gold engraving. He was equally proficient in argillite and metal work, as also were John Cross, his close kinsman, and Charlie Edensaw of Massett. The tools of these native craftsmen for engraving metals, argillite, and wood were either the same tools or adapted from similar models; all of them were like those of the White Man, the Russians in Alaska first of all, and the Tlingit of Alaska as middlemen.

The rope border in some argillite plates is derived chiefly from wood carving. The incised godroons, almost all around the borders, belong to both metal and wood work; they occur in most of the plates by Price and Edensaw. In their simplest form, they are mere parallel lines, either continuous or in groups, across the flat border.

The cross-hatching as a filler or as shading in the background is also of the metal-working variety. With Price it usually is broad. The lines are well spaced out; occasionally they are curved. But Price, like Edensaw, was able to produce extremely fine cross-hatching. The delicate scroll work in the largest plate by him at the National Museum is purely European: it must have been taken from a silver plate model. It was also used in silver or gold bracelets and brooches.

Price's line work and the deeply incised cuts in engraving—sometimes concave, at other times sloping down to one side—are comparable in quality to those of Charlie Edensaw, these two craftsmen having been



among the best engravers and all-round sculptors in the land. The abalone shell and polished bone insets (in one instance Venetian coloured beads) were in keeping with the technique for surface decoration familiar among the northernmost natives on the North Pacific Coast, on the islands of Polynesia, among the continental Mongolians, and on the other continents farther afield. In a few instances in Price's work, the abalone shell work in round, oval, square, and triangular shapes is probably as intricate and excellent as was ever achieved among his compatriots and their neighbours.



## MINIATURE CHESTS, BOXES, AND HOUSES

### CHESTS AND BOXES

In the assortment of scrimshaw objects and devices carved by American whalers are many work-boxes, ditty boxes, and cases studded with bone and shell inlays. The Polynesians in the South Seas and the Haida of the Queen Charlotte Islands also carved similar articles and decorated them in the same way, for it was their custom to borrow ideas and patterns from the white seamen and from one another, in the course of repeated contacts from 1792 to the end of the nineteenth century.

Quite early in the 1790's, the Haida were already using full-sized ornate boxes and bowls. This contention is borne out by John Hoskins' Narrative of the Second Voyage of the "Columbia," in 1791 (MS. at the Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston)—

"Coyah (Connehaw or Gunya) the chief, a woman, perfect white when paint washed off (p. 204) . . . Lip piece peculiar to the females (p. 205) . . . None of us ever visited them at their village . . . In their canoes are wooden boxes and bowls of various shapes, neatly made, with human and animal figures carved on them . . . (p. 206) . . . Wooden boxes and bowls . . . neatly wrought; spoons with human figures carved on the handle and inlaid with copper. These were supposed by some of our gentlemen to be made of whale bone" (p. 207).

On the mainland, the Niskæ chests were outstanding at a fairly early date, and they are well represented in the museums. Yet they were not truly prehistoric. They seem to have entered the Tsimshyan area with the navigators via Russian-occupied Alaska at the end of the eighteenth century. They were Chinese or Russian-like. The derivative Indian forms—Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshyan—are not unlike Slavonic caskets and tool chests, and their surface decoration has much in common with the Chinese lacquer-red or -blue caskets; these were imported in numbers by the sea-traders engaged in coastal barter and are still fairly common in the houses on the North Pacific Coast.

The oldest Haida and Nass River boxes, engraved outside with stylized faces, eyes, and hands, were known as chief's chests. At public functions, a chief stood and danced on his own ceremonial chest; at other times he stored his regalia in it: a crown with sea-lion bristles and carved plaque showing a crest attached to a long ermine train, a chasuble-like blanket woven of mountain-goat wool on a foundation of twisted cedar bark, and an assortment of masks, rattles, and sacred insignia of office.

The Haida exchanged their own manufactured articles for those of their neighbours, the Niskæ, whom they visited every spring at Fishery Bay to fish for *oolachen* (candlefish). They traded large dug-out canoes (*hayets* coppers serving as currency) and sundry silver ornaments for exquisite wood-carvings: head-dresses, rattles, chests, and secret charms. Charlie Edensaw, who lived for many years among the Tsimshyan at Port Simpson, imitated them in many ways, particularly in making chests not only of cedar but of argillite.



Two myths were illustrated by Edensaw on the covers of argillite caskets at the National Museum of Canada: the Creation of man out of the Clam, and the Grizzly Bear and Woman. The row of human faces emerging from the Clam on the lid of the first box may be one of the earliest specimens of its type. Here the relief was produced by separate carvings glued to the flat surface, much in the manner of the carved wooden appliques in the reredos of the Russian Orthodox church at Sitka, Alaska. On either side of the Clam, the Grizzly Bear and the Frog stand one above the other, as if on guard (Aaronson collection.  $13\frac{1}{2}'' \times 8\frac{1}{2}'' \times 6''$ . Cf. *Haida Myths*. No. 124).

The quality of the Bear-Mother group on the lid of the other casket shows that it was carved by a more mature craftsman many years after the other, presumably after 1890. The relief and engraving are at their best. The Woman who had provoked the Grizzlies lies in anguish across the lid; the indignant Bears on both sides along the length of the lid seem ready to tear her apart. To make the scene typically Haida, the artist has effectively arranged composite eyes, ears, feathers, and fins around these dramatic figures. And the frame of incised godroons around it is like Edensaw's signature (Aaronson collection.  $15'' \times 8'' \times \frac{3}{4}''$ . Cf. *Haida Myths*. No. 54).<sup>1</sup>

In an elaborate chest by George Smith, the Mosquito (Weelæk) was carved out of the block and surrounded by low relief engravings. Apparently unknown previously among the Haida, this crest was widespread among the Tsimshyan. It stressed once more the close relationship between the Eagle clans of the mainland and the islands, and their ready exchange of privileges. The Mosquito with a human face, a long sharp nose, and feathered wings was the badge of some Wolf clans on the upper Skeena River. It spread to the lower Nass and less than a hundred years ago was taken over by Hladerh, a quarrelsome Wolf warrior who joined forces with Mountain, a leading Eagle-Wolf chief, to fulfil his ambitions.

A myth explains the origin of the Mosquito crest: Yawl, a young unmarried woman, once broke her seclusion taboos to play with her brothers. This violation of an ancient rule brought about a sudden revulsion in nature. One summer night a fall of snow covered the ground. In the morning, when the brothers and sister looked out, their lodge was nearly buried under snow, and the country around looked very strange. Huge-Belly, a monster of the mountain, called the young law-breakers outside and with his long, knife-like, shining nose split them open as a fisherman would a salmon. On the rafters of his smoke-house he hung out to dry the bodies of all but the last two of them: one of the brothers and the guilty sister. These had taken to flight. Kaigyot, the sister of Huge-Belly, gave chase to them with her long nose, which she drew out like a knife. Detecting them in their hiding place behind a tree at the edge of a lake, she pounced, but missed them and fell head-long into the icy waters, where she remained, to freeze. Before dying, Kaigyot cried out, "The people shall always suffer the sting of my nose!" And out of her remains at the edge of the lake were born myriads of mosquitoes and other forest pests. From this experience, the surviving brother, sister, and their relatives acquired the crest Weelæk, Mosquito. This emblem first belonged to Loos of Qaldo, at

<sup>1</sup> Three other argillite chests, not yet examined, appear in the catalogue of the American Museum of Natural History in New York. They form part of the Powell collection dating back to about 1879.





63. Argillite chest with Mosquito crest (Nat. Mus. Can.)

the headwaters; it passed from hand to hand to his Wolf relatives down the Skeena and Nass rivers, finally to Hladerh of the lower Nass, and to his Eagle confederates; first, chief Mountain, who called it Weelæk and had it carved with a sharp nose a fathom long, at the bottom of his totem pole at Gitiks; second, Legyærh, the native host to the Hudson's Bay Company at Port Simpson, who called it Gyebelk; and third, George Smith, who seldom used it, perhaps only once, on the argillite chest now preserved at the National Museum of Canada ( $13\frac{1}{2}'' \times 8\frac{1}{2}'' \times 6''$ . 89393. No. 63) (Cf. *Haida Myths*. No. 272—similar).

Like the Beaver carving on the opposite side of the same chest and the Wasco monster on the lid, the Mosquito crest is typical of Edensaw's splendid craftsmanship in his hey-day, just before the turn of the century. Yet it proves to be one of his earliest. The "G. J. Salmon 66" engraved amateurishly inside the lid probably indicates the time—1866—of its carving. The figures coincide with stirring events on the lower Nass in which chief Hladerh was involved. Ambitions leading to the erection of the tallest and finest totem poles ever known had degenerated into quarrels between the Wolf and the Eagle factions, and blood was shed, undoubtedly to the knowledge of Edensaw, who was still a minor chief under his uncle Charlie Edward Edensaw.

The Mosquito on the argillite chest consists of a semi-human face with a knife-like nose, glued to the rising surface. Two tiny human faces are tucked in next to the nostrils; a larger one is held, upside down, between the teeth; small faces are engraved on the eyeballs. The line pattern on both sides of the Mosquito head, occupying half the space, contains pointed feathers from the wings of the Mosquito and a beak with two rows of teeth.

The Wolf and Grizzly Bear crests were used by Edensaw on one of his most ambitious caskets, preserved at the United States National Museum, Washington. Meaningless capitals, COWTLINS, engraved in front of the semi-detached Grizzly and the two Frogs glued to the lid show that the carver carefully reproduced printed letters without being able to read them. As the Grizzly and the Wolf were his father's crests, Edensaw could





64. Wolf and Grizzly Bear on a chest (U.S. Nat. Mus.)



not appropriate them without disregarding the custom of availing himself of crests inherited only on his mother's side. This lapse, perhaps because of expediency, and the frequent mixture of crests belonging to both parents make it plain that the Haida adhered to the principle of maternal inheritance far less strictly than did the Tsimshian and the Tlingit. And Edensaw's example certainly did not tend to promote it among his own people. His use of his father's Wolf and the Grizzly-Bear totems was a licence, but it increased his repertory of motifs and opened the door to stylizations and devices once initiated by his paternal kinsmen at Skidegate. The Frogs flanking the Grizzly on the lid of the chest are decorative rather than totemic. When totemic, they belonged to the Eagles. Carved in high relief, the two heads of the Wolf applied to the ends of the chest with fish glue or resin have longer snouts than the two others on the sides. The eyes and nostrils of the Bear and the Frogs on the lid are embellished with disks of opalescent abalone shell. The paws of one of the Wolves rest on two small human faces, whose eyes also glitter with shells. And the flat engravings between the appliques consist of two concentric circles of dotted godroons around the figures, of eyes large and small, and of ears or feathers with cross-hatchings. The Beaver crest, Edensaw's own, decorates the opposite side (Cat. 88999, 34725-E.  $14\frac{1}{2}''$  x  $8''$  x  $7\frac{1}{4}''$ . collected by J. G. Swan, 1884. No. 64).



65. Wolf decorating chest (U.S. Nat. Mus.)



Another chest, with appliquéd heads of the Wolf on the sides but without detached figures on the lid, may not so safely be ascribed to Edensaw.<sup>1</sup> Both chests, collected at the same date, closely resemble each other, yet vary in important accessories. If from different hands, they go back to one model, the carvers following the same family tradition (34725-E.  $11\frac{1}{2}'' \times 8\frac{1}{2}'' \times 8\frac{1}{2}''$ . U.S. Nat. Mus., Washington. Also collected by J. G. Swan, in 1884. No. 65).

The heads of the Wolf at the ends of both chests are almost identical but lack the detached ears. The treatment of the other Wolf is rather different, and the pattern runs to the very edge of the surface without the godroon frame or border customary in Edensaw's work. The long carved legs and claws of the Wolf on one side of the chest are not in the Edensaw manner.

The Blackfish, deeply engraved on the lid, is a leading crest of the Raven clan. As it was not one of Edensaw's, but one of his father's, at Skidegate, this carver really had no right to make it his own here, no more than he would the Wolf and the Grizzly Bear. Yet, to face a handicap, native craftsmen like Edensaw were past masters in finesse. The

pattern on the lid may have been meant for the Blackfish of the Raven clans, except for his counterpart among the Eagles of Wasco or Sea-Wolf. It does not display the perforated dorsal fin, a distinctive feature of the Blackfish. His scale-like vertebrae, besides, are similar to those of Wasco and are attributed to Edensaw (on a round plate previously studied).

The Humming-Bird was seldom used as decoration, yet it was a crest of a few Eagle households in Edensaw's own tribe. We find it in Swanton's *The Haida* (Jesup... Plate XXIII, 2), where it is said to belong to three families; it is also on an argillite chest collected by the Indian agent Deasy. On the front of this chest, a bird with a needle-like beak is split into halves, back to back. On his neck and breast are rows of wave-like feathers. His open wings, slanted upward on both sides and composed of stylized



66. Grizzly Bear and Frogs on box  
(Mrs. E. R. McLeod's coll., Oregon)



67. "Spencer Box"  
(Municipal Museum, Vancouver)

<sup>1</sup> Russ thought that this casket was the work of "Peter Kelley's father" of Skidegate.



eyes and feathers, fill the rest of the space. This fine engraving reminds one of others with split birds—Eagle, Raven—to be seen on the silver and gold bracelets of the Tlingit and Haida, presumably inspired by the double-headed Eagle on the Russian Imperial coat of arms. The other totem, engraved on the lid of the chest, is a quadruped with pointed teeth and a pile of cylinders on his head—perhaps the Wolf or the Bear. Four ivory lozenges, besides, decorate the lid, the edges of which consist of a nicely executed rope design for a border (46864. Not shown).

Another fine argillite box showing Edensaw's masterful technique at its best is reproduced as an illustration of Haida 'slate' carving in *A Standard Dictionary of the English Language* by Funk & Wagnall, New York, 1898. Within a halo of radiating godroons, the Beaver's face appears in a simplified setting of engraved eyes and accessories in middle relief on the front. The projecting heads at both ends of the box are of the Wasco swallowing the Whale (the Edensaw crest), used at least twice before on similar chests (*See* p. 1684).

A box of argillite with an indifferent design and with the Frog on the lid is in the National Museum of Canada, No. 10,2089, but is not shown here. This splendid chest, in much the same style, has two Frogs facing each other on the lid, and the Grizzly Bear on all sides projects from 2 to 2½ inches. This chest is the property of Mrs. Edith Rutenic McLeod of Klamath Falls, Oregon. It is presumably the work of George Smith (16" x 9" x 7¾". No. 66).

Another chest of argillite, the most elaborate of its class, at the Municipal Museum, Vancouver, called the "Spencer Box," required great skill in technique for its production, and the materials must have been faultless to stand the test. This is attributed to Tom Price or John Cross, of Skidegate.<sup>1</sup> The figures displayed on the lid and at the sides and ends are partly those of the Skidegate repertory: Wasco's head as handles at both ends holds a small Whale; on the cover the Eagles with outspread wings pounce upon a snake-like monster whose body is coiled, showing fight, and whose head is turned back; a stylized leafy ornament covers the head of the monster. Two small frogs, nicely designed, seem ready to leap from the corners, and, on the opposite side, the face of a white man with a long aquiline nose and side-whiskers is quite realistic. The large bulging head to one side of the box, that of a lion or griffon, with human hair parted in the middle, a human chin, and an aquiline nose, must have been inspired by a figure-head on a sailing ship or a brass



68. Griffon of the Nass; wood carving

<sup>1</sup> Published in the Museum and Art News, Vancouver, June, 1932.





69. Killer-Whale box (Am. Mus. Nat. Hist., N.Y.)



knocker on a door. Another Griffon, carved out of wood, was discovered in 1929 on the Nass River. Its claws are powerful. On the opposite side of the box abuts the rear of the monster, with the tail swaying, its hind claws turned the wrong way, while a scarf-like tie apparently binds together a hind leg and a front leg (*No. 67*. Of the wood-carved Griffon of the Nass: 73179: *No. 68*).

Two of the finest boxes with similar all-over engraved designs represent the Killer-Whale (at the American Museum of Natural History, New York). They are the work of a Skidegate master, presumably Tom Price, in the 1880's (16/687, 688. Photo. A.M.N.H. *No. 69*).

The sides of two boxes, also at the American Museum of Natural History, may be from the same hands. They are both of the best, one representing the Grizzly Bear, the other perhaps the Whale (only one shown). (16/1149. Photo. A.M.N.H. *No. 70*).

Three more sides of engraved boxes from Skidegate likewise belong to the American Museum of Natural History, New York. The first represents the Killer-Whale, the second the Grizzly Bear; and the third (the end of a box) contains only stylized eye, ear, and claw patterns (Not shown). (16/1149 or 22717; 16/1150. *Nos 71, 72*).

A very fine argillite box with the head of the Grizzly in high relief on one side and an engraving of the same crest on the lid is the work of Charlie Edensaw of Massett. The heads projecting on both sides are stylistic; yet, at the beginning, they seem to have been meant for the Wasco, the Grizzly-of-the-Sea. The godroons along the border, the smooth cross-hatching, and the icon-like halo around the Grizzly's head are like Edensaw's own signature; they reveal the technique of a



70. Grizzly-Bear box  
(Am. Mus. Nat. Hist., N.Y.)



71. Killer-Whale Box  
(Am. Mus. Nat. Hist., N.Y.)



72. Grizzly Bear on opposite side





73. Grizzly Bear box  
(Smithsonian Inst., Washington)

silversmith (From the Smithsonian Institution, Washington. 6198. No. 73).

Another box with a Grizzly in high relief, in the Michael Ash collection at the Cranbrook Institute, Michigan (another Grizzly in relief decorates the cover), is by no means of the same quality as the above specimens, yet the accomplishment is creditable (No. 74).

An argillite box at the British Museum, London, was presented in 1920 by Comm. A. C. Bell, R.N. It appears in the catalogue with the comment: "Showing European influence." Decorated with abalone inlays,

its engraved figures on one side are of the Grizzly Bear with the *skyil* cylinders over his nose and two Killer-Whales in a band under the Grizzly; a Grizzly with protruding tongue at one end; and on the lid a Killer-Whale with a small being in his mouth ( $4\frac{1}{2}'' \times 9\frac{1}{4}'' \times 5\frac{1}{2}''$ . Photo by M.B. 88-4,5,6, 1953. Not shown).



74. Grizzly-Bear box (Michael Ash coll., Cranbrook Inst.)



One more argillite box was recorded and photographed at the Alaska Historical Library and Museum at Juneau, Alaska. The Bullhead may be the design on one side of the box, to which are added four abalone inlays; the Frog decorates the lid (Photo 10,2089. Not shown).



75. Sea monster Wasco, and dog  
(British Museum)

The sea monster Wasco and other grotesque faces were used as gargoyle-like projections on rafters in the framework of roofs in ceremonial houses and as handles on argillite chests and boxes. Two detached samples of Wasco heads were found at the British Museum; they are part of the A.W. Franks collection (1883) and must be due to "Jimmy" Deans' activities at Skidegate in the same year. Here, by accident, they are grouped with a dog, which was carved in the same alert spirit (British Museum: the Wasco, A.W.F. "Queen Charlotte islands," 96-1203, 1204,  $7\frac{1}{2}$ " x  $2\frac{1}{2}$ ". The dog, the F. Sandiman collection. 18.V.77. 218. 11" x 4". Photo by M.B. 71-4, 1953. No. 75).

## HOUSES

Miniature argillite and wooden houses were carved as curios for the sea trade. They do not belong to the native tradition of the Queen Charlotte Islands.

The Chicago World Fair c. 1892 had quite an extensive exhibit of the Haida and other handicrafts of the North Pacific Coast. Early in 1916 the author saw and photographed a number of wood carvings at the Field Columbian Museum in Chicago, which were shown at the Fair. Among the models recorded at the time were a few portals and painted frontals. These formed part of a representative group of Haida houses in a native village. One of them is reproduced here. The crests on the portal with an oval entrance are the Thunderbird and above it the Bullhead. The painted figures on the frontal are of the Thunderbird and his halo (Photo by M.B. 31135. No. 76).

The feast or potlatch houses of the Haida, like the square houses of neighbouring coastal nations, were communal and very large, as may be seen in photographs of villages taken in the 1880's and 1890's, and of deserted villages even later; for instance of Kasaan in Alaska, and of chief Wihæ's house at Massett (Of Kasaan. Photo 13957. Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist., New York. Of Massett. Photo N.M.C. J2547. No. 77).

During festivals, these houses could accommodate a number of related families and hundreds of invited guests from near or remote villages. They consisted of an open frame of heavy posts and summer beams supporting a roof and walls of split cedar planks. The walls of only a very few of them were decorated outside, except among the Bella Bella, and lately, among





76. Wooden model of Haida house (Chicago World's Fair)



77. Wihæ's house at Massett in 1880's (Nat. Mus. Can.)





78. Grizzly-Bear argillite house (Nat. Mus. Can.)



other Kwakiutl tribes of the mainland south of the Skeena River. The decoration was painted in native ochres and other pigments, but not carved.

The most important reproduction in argillite of a potlatch house was attributed by Hill of Massett in 1947 to "an old man, probably not Charlie Edensaw." The engravings on the front and side are of the Grizzly Bear, whose tongue sticks out. The wry faces at the front end of the rafters are human. 'Captain' Brown, on being shown a photograph of the structure, called it the "Grizzly Bear house, *Rhootsnass*" and said it belonged to Skidegate. This is the specimen that prompted Charlie Gladstone to declare that it was "the kind of thing made for Jimmy Deans" for the Chicago World's Fair display (Photo N.M.C. 89390, 89388. No. 78).

The human heads, serving as gargoyles or look-outs, recall similar carvings on actual feast houses of the 1870's and 1880's among the Haida and the Tsimshian. They may have been inspired by Gothic devices of the same type, represented in ships and perhaps in some outposts and fortifications of the white people on the North Pacific Coast. Four of these Haida gargoyles on one side have stolid faces; two others, with thick lips and wide open mouths, seem to be singing. The eyes of the vociferous ones are deep; that is, they are represented by a cavity, an unusual method in Haida carving. Oval inlays of walrus ivory dot the eyes and nostrils of the Grizzly Bears that decorate the four sides of the square house (12" x 10" x 8").

Another argillite house, apparently by Charlie Edensaw of Massett, belongs to the American Museum of Natural History, New York. An



79. Miniature wooden house with totem, Massett (British Museum)



80. "Bear Tomb", Massett (British Museum)





81. Wooden model of house  
(Mun. Mus., Vancouver)

exquisitely engraved decoration all around, even on the roof, represents Hoorts, the Grizzly Bear. The human faces within circles at the corners of the mouth are smoothly brought out and polished. And the four Wasco-like gargoyles are in fine Edensaw style (Photo Am. Mus. Nat. Hist. 22717. Not shown).

In 1947 (at Massett) a song came back to Russ's memory at the sight of an argillite house in a photograph. As it was the house of the Raven, this bird once said: "Who's going to sing? Any friends at all? Do I really have friends? Still, I have visitors to welcome into my house. And there would be nobody to sing for them! The people, my guests, are now arriving. The only ones to sing for me are the roof beams of my house." The beams actually sang their welcome into the house. This was part of the old Raven tale.

Several wooden houses in miniature were seen and photographed in museums and private collections, as follows:

A house with a tall portal post represents in carving and paint the Grizzly Bear, presumably by Charlie Edensaw of Massett. It forms part



82. Model of house with totem  
(Musée de l'Homme, Paris)



of the British Museum collections and was purchased in 1898 (Cf. *Journal Royal Anthropological Institute*. Vol. XXXIII. P. 9). It is now coupled with the "Bear Tomb," acquired in 1902 (Photos by M.B. A-10/53 in 1953. House: 36" high. Bear Tomb: 75-3 in 1953. Nos. 79, 80).

A house in the Municipal Museum collection in Vancouver is decorated with attached carvings of the Beaver as a frontal entrance post, the Thunderbird as corner uprights, and two Whales in high relief as lateral cover boards at the front. Two Thunderbirds are also painted on the front, their backs to the entrance post at the oval doorway (Photo by M.B. 102506. No. 81).

The decoration of another miniature house in the Provincial Museum collection in Victoria is more stylized than the others shown here. Half-way up its frontal post, with round entrance, are carved a human face and two almost similar birds, one above the face and the other below. The painting on both sides is merely decorative (Photo by M.B. 73174. Not shown).

A larger house, presumably Haida, was found in the collection at Musée de l'Homme in Paris. The figures on the frontal post with a round entrance are (from the top down) as follows: the Thunderbird framed within a leafy background (as in figure-heads and billets on sailing ships), the Raven, and the Killer-Whale with protruding tongue like the Grizzly-Bear's (Photo by M.B. 105A-5 in 1953. No. 82).

The last of these model houses was photographed at Alex Yæhl-tetsee's home in Massett and was mistakenly attributed by him to Charles Gway-tihl, whose work is of superior quality. In Alfred Adam's opinion, it was Robert Ridley's work: "He did a great deal of this kind of thing." Highly ornate, its front was decorated in paint with two Killer-Whales (73174. Not shown).



## CRESTS AND STYLIZED ANIMALS IN MINIATURE TOTEMS (Gyans)<sup>1</sup>

(c. 1860–1930)

### LATE BEGINNINGS

To most people the tall heraldic poles on the Queen Charlotte Islands, after which the argillite totems were patterned, stand as veteran symbols of prehistory. Yet they are not. They could not be; a red cedar, cut down when it is still green, carved a year or two later and planted without preservatives, is highly perishable. Soon it begins to rot at the base, and its weight, together with the action of wind, storm, and frost, brings it down within a fairly short span of years—often less than fifty years, particularly on the sea-coast where the moisture persists the year round and the muskeg covering the ground and the lichen growth are corrosive. Up the Skeena and Nass rivers, where the climate is drier and the soil may be gravelly, some of the oldest poles have stood unrestored for as long as seventy or, at best, a hundred years. They are the most archaic specimens



83. Wooden rattle with "sasaw" or projecting tongue

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Totem Poles of the Gitksan*, Bull. No. 61. National Museum of Canada; "The modern growth of the Totem pole on the Northwest Coast," by Marius Barbeau, in *The Smithsonian Report for 1939*, pp. 491-498; and *Totem Poles*, Vols. I and II, by the same author. Bull. 119, 1951-52.





84. Argillite panel with "sasaw"  
(Peabody Museum, Harvard)

of their kind. A systematic survey of all of them has made it clear that there totem-pole carving evolved from humble beginnings after 1840. In a short period of rapid development it passed through two or three phases or styles. Some of the poles at Gitiks and Angyadæ on the Nass count among the oldest. Those of the Haida, except for a few at Kyusta, belong to the middle period. Almost all the house posts and 'totems' of the Kwakiutl and Nootka farther south were erected no earlier than 1895 or even later.

On the North Pacific Coast, the growth of heraldry or so-called totemism coincides with that of the art which served it as a vehicle. It cannot be said to be ancient or prehistoric. The double-headed Thunderbird or Eagle is derived from the Russian crest, familiar on the Alaskan coast after 1790; and the Beaver was introduced by the North West Company and the Hudson's Bay Company after 1830. Both Thunderbird and Beaver are the foremost and oldest of all crests.

Archæologists have failed to unearth anything like the present totems under any form. The stone and bone carvings and the rock engravings found in some places, among them a Garuda bronze from Asia, a few hundred years old,<sup>1</sup> dug up at Kincolith, are of a different type—Asiatic or rather formless. They have nothing in common with the highly stylized art of such tribes as the Haida, the Tsimshian, and the Tlingit.

Most of the best woodcarvers working from 1860 to 1880 belonged to the Niskæ, the Haida, the southern Tlingit tribes, and the Gitksan, and their names were

<sup>1</sup> *Alaska Beckons*, by Marius Barbeau. The Caxton Printers, Caldwell, Idaho, 1947. Pp. 200, 201, on the Garuda.



recently compiled, details of their lives were recorded, and their work was often identified.

#### SASAW POLES

Three of the oldest argillite "totems" at the National Museum of Canada, dated 1870-1874, are non-totemic and purely derivative (*No. 83* in the Paul Rabut collection).

The Sasaw with projecting tongue<sup>1</sup> was already a feature in argillite panels and pipes among the Haida in the 1830's, as may be seen<sup>2</sup> on a pipe from Skidegate at the Peabody Museum, Harvard University (*No. 84*).

#### THUNDERBIRD

Much has been written about the use of the Thunderbird in crests.<sup>3</sup> One of the oldest poles embodying it was collected by S. H. Harris in the early 1870's; it is at the National Museum of Canada.<sup>4</sup> Next in date, apparently in 1874, the argillite pole with the Thunderbird, collected by J. G. Swan, is a portal or house-front post; now at the United States National Museum, Washington.<sup>5</sup>

In a totem pole (*No. 85 A and B*) of the Paul Rabut collection (Westport, Connecticut), the Thunderbird and the Whale are placed at the base, just as they are in *No. 176* in *Haida Myths*. Over them a chief sits, wearing a conical hat with two *skyils* (cylinders). Above him, likewise, are the Raven, the Bear, and the Frog, composed differently. At the top the Eagle or Thunderbird is resting. This fine specimen may be attributed, like *No. 176*, to Amos Watson, one of the best carvers at Skidegate early in our century.

At times the bird features<sup>6</sup> consist only of the eyed and pennate wings, the feathered legs, and the talons. Instead of the usual hooked bill, sometimes the nose in the human-like face is markedly aquiline. In place of the Whale dangling from the talons, the Sea-Lion spreads out, head down, his wide tail held above in the mouth of the bird monster. To emphasize the identity of the Grizzly below, already pointed out by the protruding tongue and the claws, a small Bear's head and forepaws are inserted between the ears and in the ear lobes. In the human head, torso, raised elbows, and hands resting on the hips, inserted between the Thunderbird and the Grizzly, we find an expressive bit of sculpture in the realistic vein. The iris of the eyes is ovoid or elongated and bulging in the centre, not compass-made with a central dot. The hair and moustache are dotted, the lips are thin and true to life, and the hands show the thumb, which is unusual in the paw-like forms elsewhere.

The Thunderbird with a strong incurved bill appears five times in a fine set of argillite carvings of the 1910-1920 period, mostly from Skidegate. He stands at the bottom of three of these columns; in one instance, a chief

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Haida Myths*, pp. 376-377.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, Nos. 61, 123.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 373-409; Nos. 61, 123, 165, 169-171, 175, 298, 301. Also photo N.M.C. 88927. Nos. 83 and 84, this vol.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 213-214, No. 172.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 214, No. 169.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, No. 174.



85A. Thunderbird  
and Whale  
(Paul Rabut  
coll.)  
←

85B. Front view  
of same totem →





sits on his head. This chief wears a conical hat similar to the one on the McKay pole with this mythic bird. It is of the same period.

The figures associated with the Thunderbird on these columns are the Black Whale and the Raven thrice; the Beaver, the Grizzly, and the Dogfish twice; the Eagle, the Sculpin, and the Frog once. Several of these specimens may be the work of Lovatt Miller, a member of the Thunderbird clan at Gold Harbour, later of Skidegate (Photo at the National Museum of Canada. No. 88927).

Outside of the totem pole repertory, a number of argillite carvings and engravings cast more light on the story of the Thunderbird. A remarkable pipe or panel in the old Skidegate style preceding the 1870's, at the American Museum of Natural History in New York, presents this mystic bird in an unfamiliar garb. It is the least orthodox Thunderbird we know, presumably produced before it was definitely formalized among the Haida.<sup>1</sup>

Another argillite piece in the form of a small panel was presumably inspired by the *hasærh* or rattle pattern of the Niskæ. The Thunderbird with a hooked bill and feathered wings is at one end, the Sasaw with elongated tongue at the other, and a small bear or wolf-like figure separates the two. A second quadruped stands on the head of the monster with the protruding tongue. This carving, preserved at the University of California Museum since 1904, was a gift of the Alaska Commercial Company (No. 2-4687).

An unusual stylization, acquired in the 1890's by the Denver Art Museum, consists of a small argillite panel. In a group of four figures, comprising a human head, the Raven, the Grizzly, and the Thunderbird, three are turned one way, and the fourth, the Raven, is back to back with the Grizzly. The large head with a three-cylindrical hat, which the Thunderbird holds in his hands, may be that of a chief. The human-like arms of the Thunderbird are feathered. The head with the tall hat may represent the Snag, an undersea monster resembling the Whale. The Snag is characterized by a long, sharp dorsal fin, sometimes said to emerge from the waters at the mouth of the Skeena River and to break up Indian canoes. (No. Otti-I-G. 8" x 4¼" x 1¼". Not shown).

#### EAGLE

As a clan emblem the Eagle has enjoyed wider prestige than any other crest on the North Pacific Coast, where there is no basic distinction between the Eagle and the Thunderbird.

In an old pole forming part of the Powell collection (1879) the Eagle is quite stylistic. Its body is clothed with feathers in neat rows of curved lines; his face, human-like, is without a bill. His wide mouth shows two rows of teeth in curves similar to the feathers, and the round nostrils, over the band-like lips, complete an intriguing pattern. To round out the set of figures, a chief at the top wears a conical hat surmounted by the usual three Stistas cylinders, and the Beaver, with wide incisors, checkered tail, and curled nostrils similar to the Eagle's, sits at the bottom (No. 86).

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Haida Myths*, p. 208. Cat. No. 19/6663. 4½" x 11".



The Eagle-Halibut was a favourite theme of the Skidegate carvers, who have lived to old age into our century, among them Tom Price, George Smith, and John Cross. Several wooden and argillite totem poles of George Smith and John Cross contain the Halibut dangling from the beak of the Eagle. A smaller bird, head down, rests on the body of the flat fish as if within a medallion (Nos. 8,9—in the Lipsett collection, Vancouver).

The Eagle-Halibut as described in the traditions of the Tsimshyan appeared more than once on their totem poles and carvings, and a few Haida craftsmen availed themselves of it in their own right. At least six instances show the head of the Eagle on the flat body of the Halibut; they are preserved in museums or reproduced in illustrated publications.

The earliest occurrence of this theme among the Haida is found on an argillite pole in the Powell collection at the National Museum of Canada. It was acquired in 1879. As the Eagle-Halibut in the pole is coupled with two large Killer-Whales, we may infer that it was carved at Skidegate rather than at Massett, for the Killer-Whales prevailed mostly at Skidegate. The Eagle carver here obviously enjoyed the privilege, presumably on his father's side, to use the Killer-Whale. The execution of this pole is unusually fine and well stylized. A small human head crowns the bird's forehead, and the legs and talons are minutely detailed. As the long bill of the bird is reminiscent of the Raven's, it is possible that the transformation may have been intentional—the Killer-Whale usually associating with the Raven (Height 17¾". Not shown).

Three examples of the same theme on argillite poles are preserved at the American Museum of Natural History in New York. One of these, apparently dated 1896, may furnish a clue to the date and origin of the other two. The obviously mangled information about it in the catalogue, reads, "Totem pole of the Raven clan, according to a Haida artist. The sea monster figuring above belongs to the Eagle clan. The Raven and the Halibut, on top of the Eagle, the cousin of the Raven" (No. 1896-42; 16-1157).

Of these three examples at the American Museum of Natural History, two seem to be from the same hand, although one is of better quality



86. Eagle, Grizzly, and Beaver (Nat. Mus. Can.)



than the other. Placed in the middle of the pole, as in other known occurrences, the head of the Halibut is turned down and that of the Eagle, upwards. In one instance, the talons of the Eagle emerge on either side of the fish. In the finer pole (1/312), a proud Eagle sits at the top holding his head and curved beak high and displaying his wing- and tail-feathers and his mighty talons. Another bird, Raven-like, holds in his bill the tail of the Halibut, which hangs head down. At the base of the pole, the Killer-Whale, with fore-paws and a fish tail, fiercely devours a human being, whose head has fallen back and whose right shoulder and hand are exposed; the hand is here realistically reproduced, with thumb and fingers.

At the top of the third pole, the Beaver is substituted for the Eagle and the Raven of the second pole; the Beaver as a crest is associated with the Eagle-Halibut. The Killer-Whale, with his tail turned up in front, sits at the base of the pole. He is a Haida counterpart of the Tsimshyan Grizzly-Bear-of-the-Sea, usually represented with the Bear's forelegs and the Killer's forked tail (No. 16/5214).

At the base of a miniature totem carved out of wood and collected in 1882 for the Volk Museum in Berlin, Germany, stands the Eagle-Halibut. In this exquisite carving, the Eagle (or Raven?) rests upside down on the Halibut, whose bizarre one-sided face touches the ground. Here the bird is complete, with head, wings, and legs. The feathers are in dotted rows on his head and in grooved parallel lines on the wings. The upper part of the wing is a large eye, and the outer edge is a large stylized wing feather. This crest here is compressed within a small space on the body of the larger Eagle (or Thunderbird), whose wings are like shields on either side, and whose closed talons are decorative coils close to the flat Halibut head.

A third Eagle, the most impressive of the three, sits at the summit of the pole, just above the Raven, who is shown here with his bill hanging under his human chin and with small men and frogs on his arms under his wings. The Eagle at the top wears a chief's head-dress with a pillar of three cylinders, and two Frogs with smaller pillars of two cylinders each. A small bear-like face and paws between his legs and talons may represent the Grizzly. The legs, the upraised tail with four feathers, and the face of the Eagle with a strongly aquiline beak and an upper row of wide human teeth are modelled with a power that belonged perhaps only to one of the foremost masters among the Haida—Charlie Edensaw (Cf. *Haida Myths*. No. 45).<sup>1</sup>

Sometimes the Eagle is spoken of as Bird-of-the-Air.<sup>2</sup> As such he is endowed, presumably by the Edensaws, with a pattern belonging to their clan at Kyusta and Tow Hill. The bill of the Eagle points down the post, as also does the flat body of the Halibut on which he lies, his wings outspread.

Two argillite poles now preserved at the National Museum of Canada illustrate this narrative well. The first, attributed to John Cross by Alfred Adams (it may be by Tom Price or their elder William Dixon), contains the mother-in-law in full regalia on the upper part of the pole, Bird-of-

<sup>1</sup> The North-West Coast of America . . . , Royal Museums at Berlin, Translated . . . , London, Plate 7, Fig. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Haida Myths*, Nos. 279, 280, 291; and narrative by Edensaw to Dr. Swanton, p. 333.



the-Air holding the Black Whale in his talons, and a large Black Whale at the base. Incidentally Tom Price and John Cross were members of the Eagle clan at Skidegate; they were among the most gifted carvers of their generation.

The effort of the craftsmen to give individuality and greater distinction to a crest owned in common by many clansmen is characteristic of the Northwest Coast. Every ambitious chief tried to invest his favourite crest with unique features to mark his own identity. Elsewhere the Eagle often appears without identification marks.

Once more the Eagle appears at the top of an exquisite pole of the portal type at the Denver Art Museum. On his head are the three symbolic cylinders of the Stistas clan of the northern group. Under the Eagle sit two semi-human beings with monstrous faces, one of them with a long drooping tongue. The forward posture of their bent arms, hands, legs, and feet conform to a familiar pattern in Haida art (QHi-24. Acquired in the 1890's. 15½" high).

In inspirational material the Raven has been given first rank, even before the Eagle, by the Haida artists. At the top of an excellent pole, presumably by Charlie Edensaw, the Eagle has been placed with the Raven and the Grizzly Bear; the carver used crests from both his mother's and father's sides. The Eagle here is one of the noblest examples of its kind, pausing midway between the extremes of style and realism. The eye is quiet but penetrating, and the curved beak is as good a live weapon as nature and art have ever contrived. Under the Eagle, the mild Raven provides a fine pattern with his long bill, his compressed wings, and the plump Frog hanging head down on the stomach of the Raven (Cf. *Haida Myths*, No. 97).

In a pole by a Skidegate carver, we find (from the top down) the Eagle, the Raven, the Beaver, and the Grizzly (No. 87).

In a pole about 22 inches high by a Tanu carver, the Eagle is at the top; under him are three cylinders, the Beaver, the Raven, and the Bear (No. 88).

At the foot of two poles by Tom Price sits the Grizzly Bear, a borrowed crest from the opposite phratry, as it was also for Edensaw. At the top of one of the poles, the Eagle holds up between his ears the head of a small Bear. The man wearing a conical hat with four cylinders at the top of the other pole may be a clan chief. His portrait is unusually fine and stately,



87. Eagle, Raven, Beaver, and Grizzly





88. Eagle,  
Beaver, Raven,  
and Grizzly

as are the other characters in these two columns. The large oval base of the first pole is engraved with circles all around, connected by intercrossing lines filled with cross-hatchings. This feature is a survival of earlier decoration on plates or flat surfaces (VII-B-835; 19½" high; same maker as VII-B-785. No. 89).

#### THE FAIRY (Skyil)

A last pole of outstanding quality embodying the Eagle, this time with the Fairy, forms part of the Powell collection (1879) (at the National Museum of Canada). The bird totem with the Salmon in his talons at the base of the column is nicely carved in a semi-realistic vein. His face is decorative rather than expressive.

The emphasis is on his talons holding the Salmon. Quite recognizable, the fish is turned to the right and is set off on a background of five upright tail feathers drawn in herring-bone fashion. The breast and wing feathers of the Eagle in shingle rows and the smooth rope border reminiscent of a silver technique are features that mark this as the work of Charlie Edensaw in his early period, before 1880.

Proceeding upward on the pole, we see the Grizzly's head and forepaws, skilfully treated, smaller and more elusive than usual; second, the Black Whale with his massive head and showy tail, in a subordinate way like the Bear's; and third, at the top, the Fairy (*Skyil*) with a child. On the head of the Fairy, at the summit of the pole, rests the conical hat of the Stistas Eagles with the usual three symbolical cylinders (which may be interpreted here as haloes).



89. Raven, Shark, and Grizzly,  
signed "Tom" (Price)



Next to the Eagle, the Fairy is the foremost figure in the whole carving (VII-B-781. 21". Hollow backed, like the older poles; with a slightly ornate base. Smoothly polished. Cf. *Haida Myths*. No. 171).

The Fairy (*Skyil*) was the crest of Wiyæ, the town chief of Massett, an Eagle kinsman of Charlie Edensaw. So far as we know, it does not appear elsewhere in native heraldry and may be considered fairly new. It was "special" to the town chief and his family. It seems to have been borrowed from the intrusive lore of the white people. Apparently sitting on a chair with square uprights, the Fairy holds her standing child between her arms and knees; her finger tips join in front, under the chin of her wide-faced offspring. Its source may have been the Madonna and Child, introduced early in Alaska by the Greek-Orthodox missionaries of the Russians.

The Fairy, as explained by Alfred Adams of Massett, was a small woman always cuddling her baby in her arms. She belonged to a tribe called Sad-zugahl-lanes, People-of-Kelp, *dzugahl* meaning "kelp fast at bottom." The head-chief of the Wiyæ family, once beginning a fast to gain power, resorted to the mountains behind the Yan River. There he denied himself all food and comfort for days, taking only some hemlock medicine and bitter herbs. As he was waiting for something to happen, the *Skyil* appeared to him, and he gazed at her. He took hold of the child, and before returning it to its mother, he received from her the promise that she would make him a great chief. That is how the Fairy originated as a totem, under the name of *Skyilgatkun*, meaning Hunting-for-Fairy, or *Skyilkyiwat*, Lying-on-the-Fairy-trail.

#### SHARK AND BEAVER

The Shark and the Beaver,<sup>1</sup> although placed together on a few totems of the Fugitive band of Eagles, belong separately to two successive phases of the clan migrations to the North. Of the two crests the Shark is the older.

Two small poles of good quality, carved by John Cross or Tom Price, are in the collections of the Museum of the American Indian in New York. In both of these the Shark is at the top, head below, body and tail above. The Shark's face is a woman's, with the labret of distinction in the lower lip.



90. Shark and Grizzly  
(Mus. Amer. Ind., N.Y.)

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Haida Myths*, pp. 392-404.





In one, on the forehead, are two gill marks; in the other are two circles on forehead and three gills on cheeks. In the taller of these two poles the Black Whale is shown with fierce mouth, saw-teeth in relief, and bulging fan tail turned to meet the face; the Beaver shows his long incisors and checkered tail with a face on it, in the style of the Tanu carvers. In the smaller pole, the Grizzly Bear is the only figure other than the Shark. The Bear's protruding tongue is cut almost square—one more characteristic of Price's work—and he holds in his front paws the Frog, head down (7-43; 13" high; D.T. Tozier collection; 15/4539; 11½" high. No. 90).

The Shark appears over and over again on Skidegate totems, as follows:

In one of the finest pieces of the Powell collection at the National Museum of Canada. Here, it is associated with the Bear, Nanasingat; and a chief at the top wearing a (*skyil*) hat. 1879. VII-B-828. Photo 89093. 22½" high. No. 91).

In a pole at the American Museum of Natural History, New York, where it figures with the Eagle at the top, the Shark in the middle, and the Whale at the bottom (16-550. Photo 22713. No. 92).

In another pole at the same museum in New York where the Shark bites the Halibut whose head emerges from her mouth. The Eagle is perched at the top (16-153. Not shown).



92. Eagle, Shark, and Whale  
(Am. Mus. Nat. Hist.)



91. A chief, Shark, and Grizzly (Nat. Mus. Can.)





93. Shark, Beaver, Eagle  
(Am. Mus. Nat. Hist.)

In a group of three small poles at the American Museum of Natural History, where the Shark is shown by herself or with the Beaver, the Eagle, and the Raven after he has lost his bill (*No. 93*).

In the upper part of another pole at the same museum in New York; here the tail and fins of the Shark are compressed into the smallest possible place within the block on her head (16/1161. Photo 42336. Not shown).

In three poles of the Ash collection at the Cranbrook Institute in Michigan, the Shark is given by herself and with the Whale (5" high; 12"; 11 $\frac{1}{4}$ ". Photo by M.B. 211-5, 6, in 1950. *No. 94*).



94. Shark and Whale  
(Ash coll., Cranbrook Institute)

In one out of three poles also at the Cranbrook Institute, we see the Seal, the Raven, and the Beaver. In the other poles on the same photo are seen the Bear and the Beaver, the Grizzly, the Raven with a *skyil* on his head, and the Beaver (9 $\frac{1}{2}$ " high. With the label attached; "Ye Olde Curiosity Shop, Coleman Duck, Seattle". Photo by M.B. 211-3 in 1950. Not shown).



Nowhere is the Beaver interpreted as creatively as in the work of Charlie Edensaw. But this artist used the rodent mostly as an illustration in the Raven myth of Creation. A few other carvers on the Skeena and the Nass rivers, his seniors and juniors, introduced the Beaver as a totem on head-dresses and village poles. The centres of diffusion of the Beaver concept on the North Pacific Coast were the two homes of the Eagle chief Legyærh, who patronized the Hudson's Bay Company on the mainland, that is: the hunting grounds of his tribe at Gisparhlawts near the canyon of the Skeena, and his trade village at Port Simpson on the coast. The Eagle clansmen on the Queen Charlotte Islands both at Massett and Skidegate were quick to introduce the Beaver among their tribesmen.

A nicely carved pole at the National Museum of Canada rather resembles those Skidegate poles in style and outlook, yet it bears the more realistic stamp of the North. Here the Beaver, gnawing his poplar stick and displaying his checkered tail, sits at the base, and the Stistas cylinders stand on his head. The Eagle, in the centre, holds the Frog across his finely chiselled bill; his head is surmounted by cylinders. And the Bear squats at the bottom (VII-B-658. 12½" high).

Here the Beaver, showing his long curved incisors that reach down to the slender stick held in the front paws under the chin, sits at the centre of the column. The nose, with its round nostrils, assumes the form of a clover leaf or of the royal heraldic lily of France (*fleur de lis*). The checkered tail is not so far forward as usual. Consequently there is an empty space on the exposed belly. The Bear sitting erect at the base, with a similar clover nose, thrusts his tongue out at the small Frog, which he holds in his forepaws, head down, in a pattern formed by swaying lines of curved fingers and hands. The human figure at the top clasps the cylinders affixed to the Beaver's head, and its tongue, similar to the Beaver's but not so long, protrudes. The oval eyes are reminiscent of an earlier style typical of Skidegate and the early '80's (Reproduced in *The Beaver*, Winnipeg, September, 1941).

#### KILLER-WHALE

The earliest known illustration of the Killer-Whale was the one of 1874.<sup>1</sup>

Several argillite poles and wood carvings in miniature in the museums and private collections illustrate parts of the tale, particularly of the young woman and her pursuer holding onto the dorsal fin of the Whale as they are being carried down into the sea. The two oldest and most valuable of these are one collected by J. G. Swan in 1874 in "Washington territory," at the U.S. National Museum at Washington; the other, undated, at the American Museum of Natural History in New York.

The same episode is represented differently in the pole at the American Museum, which seems to be the older of the two.<sup>2</sup> Both of these are from Skidegate. Without a hat or a labret, the woman stands behind the fin, which is crosswise and is decorated with an eye at the base and a feather or an ear. The large head of the Whale with protruding tongue is at the base of the shaft; his forked tail rises above his head, while his dorsal fin,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Haida Myths*, No. 250, p. 255, for narratives involving Killer-Whales.

<sup>2</sup> Loc. cit. No. 244.



by a decorative *tour de force*, stands farther up in front of the woman. The large bird behind the captive, whose wings are spread down and forward, is not recognizable; its face is semi-human, and it has lost its beak, which was shaped like a nose. This last illustration is highly stylized. Boldly executed, as the Skidegate carvings of the 1870's were, it is an excellent piece of work. The other illustration above is also stylized but remains closer to nature. Instead of the slight angularity of the first specimen, its contours and curved lines are balanced around two centres of composition, both of these related. It was attributed by old Henry Young of Skidegate to a Tanu or Cape St. James carver, to the south. The blend of imagination and skill in the composition makes it alive without unnecessary realism. The other effort is no less creative, but it is different. It is touched by emotion typical of a later phase of Haida art.

Another illustration of the Nanasimgyet tale also goes back to the 1870's; it forms part of the Powell collection (1879) at the National Museum of Canada. Here the Killer-Whale story is linked with that of Bear Mother, as happens among the tribes of the mainland. And this feature betrays its source; the Skidegates secured it from Tsyebasæ, the head-chief of the Tsimssyan of Gitrhahla, on an island toward the mainland. Bear Mother and a cub, head down, are here shown next to the base of the pole. Above the Grizzly is a clan chief wearing a conical hat with two cylinders. He stands (his legs remaining hidden) between two slightly smaller men in low relief, on either side of the pole—his nephews no doubt.

Another splendid showing of the Raven, Frog, Killer-Whale, and Grizzly-Bear group—within the Raven phratry—is found on a totem pole at the American Museum of Natural History in New York. Belonging to the 1880's or 1890's, it is admirably composed, executed, and polished, and is one of the great achievements of Haida craftsmanship, probably from the hands of Charlie Edensaw, although the crests displayed here were not his; they were his father's (16/1163. Photo by H. S. Rice).

The Killer-Whale next to the base forms a unique decorative pattern. Slightly tilted, the head and the protruding tongue point down to the mask-like face held close to the chest by the monster's human-like hands. The broad tail, turned upward, supports the mask which rests on a second pair of human-like hands that grip the tail. The direction of the long and well-delineated fingers around the oval centre gives to the arrangement a rhythmical turn which is arresting. Here the carver surpassed himself. The Raven and the Frog over the Whale are no less outstanding. So are the two Grizzlies at the top, the mother over her cub.

The Killer-Whale served as an illustration in two Tsimssyan tales borrowed by the Haida from the Tsimssyan: first, the Giant Devilfish, and second, Gunarhnesemgyet.<sup>1</sup> They wear similar headgear, the only Grizzly-Bear feature brought out. But the Killer-Whale in the upper half refers to the second element, which is of the salt sea. The Killer-Whale, curled forward in a small space, is complete with his big head above, his fan tail underneath, his perforated dorsal fins (one on either side) sticking

<sup>1</sup> See Boas, Tsimssyan mythology, B.A.E., Bull. 31, No. 13; Swanton's Haida Texts and Myths, B.A.E., Bull. 29, p. 840; and Boas, op. cit., p. 835.



up almost to the top of the pole in such a way that the kidnapped wife at the top can hold on to them during her sea ride. This excellent carving is by a Skidegate carver of a later date than the first two ( $18\frac{1}{4}$ " high. Cf. loc. cit., No. 248).

Another Skidegate illustration of the same myth is found in a totem pole of the 1880 decade, now preserved at the Museum of the University of California. In 1902, it was recorded as forming part of the old University collections obtained "some years earlier." Here the Killer-Whale sits at the base, with a large head and a tiny tail raised under his chin, the small fins on either side looking like wings with a large eye centre; the kidnapped woman, squatting on the Whale's forehead, holds on to the fins with her hands inserted into the perforations; the puny man standing above, his arms raised, presumably is her husband who is trying to overtake her with the help of the unidentified bird at the top of the pole M A 2. 7299. Loc. cit., No 261).

At the National Museum of Canada, the Provincial Museum at Victoria, and the American Museum of Natural History in New York, several other heraldic columns of a later date contain illustrations of the Nanasingyet story and crests. One, at the American Museum of Natural History, collected in 1896 (-42; 16-1166), is described in the catalogue as being of the "Bear; the Killer-Whale carrying a woman; a bird — perhaps the Eagle." Another, at the Provincial Museum, Victoria, British Columbia, is said to show the



95. Nanasingyet and Whale (right)  
(Pitt-Rivers, Oxford)



Crane, the man here called Nahno-singh, his wife with labret and bracelets, and the Whale; it was presumably carved after 1900, having been purchased in 1915 (No. 2866); a second pole, at the same Provincial Museum, also shows the Crane and the wife holding on to the fin while being carried away, and the Frog (No. 2867). At the National Museum of Canada one from the Aaronson collection (purchased in 1908) contains the Killer-Whale, the wife with labret holding on to the fin, and a small bird looking like the Eagle (9" high. Loc. cit., No. 225). A second one, in the same collection, also shows the Killer-Whale and the woman with labret, clinging to the back fin of the fish (VII-B-809. 9" high. Cf. *Haida Myths*. Pp. 255-304).

One more illustration of the Nanasingyet myth occurs in a splendid portal totem of argillite at the Pitt-Rivers museum at Oxford. It is the earliest on record, dating back to 1867 (Coll. Dally). The Whale is at the base, his head and tail forward, and in between is the oval opening into the house. The kidnapped woman, holding her folded-up legs with her hands, sits on the head of the Whale; on her head is a four-feathered headgear. Above her the bird helper (presumably the Eagle) is perched, his wings spread forward. And on the bird's head, the pursuing husband is sitting, his head covered with a conical hat with three *skyils* (18" high. Photo by M.B. 84-7 in 1953. No. 95).

The Grizzly Bear by himself (independently of Bear Mother) recurs on other totems, as follows:

In a fine and fairly old carving at the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, formerly in the collection of Victoria College. Here he is associated (above) with the



96. Grizzly, Halibut, Raven, Frog, and Grizzly (Roy. Ont. Mus., Toronto)





97. Beaver, Grizzly (left); Whale, Grizzly  
(Sir A. Bossom's coll., London)

Raven, holding in his bill the Frog, head down; and at the top another Grizzly bites the head of a halibut, which hangs down on his stomach (*No. 96.*)

In two totems of the Lipsett collection, Vancouver, where the Grizzly (on the totem to the left) is grouped with the same figures as in *No. 97.*: and, to the right, where the Grizzly is repeated three times (Photo by M.B. 87234. Not shown).



99. Devilfish, Grizzly (Am. Mus. Nat. Hist.) ➤



In a large argillite totem at Musée de l'Homme, Paris; here the Bear, sitting at the base, is associated with the Raven, a woman, and a small animal at the top (Photo by M.B. 93A-8, in 1953. Not shown).

In a group of two argillite totems in the private collection of Sir Alfred Bossom, M.P., London. The first (left) contains the Grizzly at the base with a small human-like figure hanging from his mouth; the Beaver, erect, lifting a poplar stick to his mouth, a *skyil* (cylinders) on his head, buttressed on each side by two human figures of chiefs. The second totem consists of the Grizzly at the base (this is in the style of Tanu); and the Whale over him, the tail above (Photo by M.B. 93-6, 7, in 1953. No. 97).

In three totems at the British Museum, we find two Grizzlies connected with the Raven (left); with the Eagle and a person (centre and right); and two Bears with the Eagle (to the right). (Photo by M.B. 61-8, 61-9, in 1953. Not shown).

A Grizzly Bear with tongue protruding in an argillite totem (In a case of the Northwest Coast Hall, at the British Museum, London. Photo by M.B. 75-9- 1953. No. 98).

A totem of fine quality and of early date, with bone insets for the teeth in two of the three figures, forms part of the British Museum collection in London. At the centre, the Grizzly sits erect on the Killer-Whale and holds the dorsal fin between his fore-paws, as Nanasingyet would do. On the Beaver's head, at the top, are three cylinders (*skyils*) ( $21\frac{1}{2}$ " high. Presented by A. W. Franks, 1869 ? or 1873 ? 97-8. Photo by M.B. Cf. *Haida Myths*. No. 247, left).

The Devilfish with horns and spikes is represented in the upper part of an argillite totem at the American Museum of Natural History, New York. The other figures below are the Bear, two Frogs, a person, and at the bottom, quite flattened, a monster's face (Photo No. 42336; spec. 16/1155. No. 99).



## MINIATURE TOTEMS PRODUCED AFTER 1870

The curio trade in miniature totems developed after 1870, and the earliest specimens so far recorded belong to the Harris collection at the National Museum of Canada; these are dated 1869. Their carvers could not be identified, but their names may figure among those who produced medicine-men, statuettes, plates, chests, and houses. Further names occasionally cropped up, like those of John Robison, Qanrhwat-Tsingé now remembered as "Ed Collison's grandpa", Ed Collison, Daniel Young, and Joliffe. Arthur Moody said of Qanrhwat-Tsingé: "He was a first-class carver in slate, too good to be forgotten after his death. Even now the people speak of this old fellow, who died at the time I went to Skidegate, about 1898. He belonged to the Grizzly-Bear people of Naikun-qegawai at Rosespit. He kept looking for the white people, rich traders, and they were many. He made all they asked of him, when they came to buy sea-otter skins and all sorts of things—slate carvings, slate boxes, and totems."

Qanrhwat-Tsingé may have been of the same family as Charlie Edensaw's father. As Edensaw learned a great deal from his father's people at Skidegate, Tsingé possibly had something to do with his training. The Naikun-qegawai (Those-born-at-Rosespit), to whom no doubt they both belonged, are described in the following terms by Dr. Swanton (Jesup . . ., p. 270): "*Chief*—Ladjan qona ('great swashing of waves'), a name of the Cape Ball sgana. *Crests*—Grisly bear, killer-whale, tcamaos (snag), stratus-clouds, cirrus-clouds, hawk, sea-lion (recently adopted). They also wore a hat painted blue on the upper surface, and supposed to be that of one of the supernatural beings."

Old Mrs. Susan Gray stated (in 1947) that "*Ed Collison* was a fine carver of totem poles in slate, of statuettes, and slate pipes." She outlived three husbands, all slate carvers. Ed Collison, whose name was Qanrhwat, possibly the nephew of Qanrhwat-Tsingé, was still living in 1947, though blind. He was reported to have been "an excellent sculptor of totem poles in slate, also of slate pipes and statuettes." Mrs. Gray said that she often had "watched him do little people." Both an Eagle and a Raven, he was expected to succeed to chief Skidegate and actually was called by that name, but he never bothered to assume it formally.

Other names were casually mentioned at Skidegate; for instance, *Mailis*, a carver of miscellanea, including totems still remembered by Henry Young when he himself was a little boy.

Joliffe of Old Kloo and head man at Queen Charlotte City is said to have carved Indian doctors about 12 inches by 6 inches in size. As also remembered by Arthur Moody, he was not old enough to have carved actual totem poles, but he made small totems according to the old style.

The most substantial makers of argillite totems at Skidegate, after 1880 and 1890, were Louis Collison and his brother Amos Watson, and George Smith; the Kloo and Tanu carvers: Lovatt Miller, the three





100. Raven, Bear Mother, Wasco, Beaver  
(Deasy coll., Cranbrook Inst.)



101. Smoking pipe with various figures  
(same coll.)

Moody's, the brothers Paul and Moses Jones; John Cross, Jim Mackay, and others. They will be presented each in separate chapters.

A number of argillite totems, found and recorded in public and private collections, cannot be attributed to any craftsman in particular. In addition to those already published in *Haida Myths*, they are as follows:

A small totem of exceptional character and refinement at the American Museum of Natural History, New York, represents (from the top down) the Eagle or the Raven, and the Grizzly with the head of the Eagle or the Raven on his lap (Specimen No. 16.1/2123. Not shown).

The Grizzly Bear and Woman totem, with the Raven and Salmon, and a bear cub at the top, in the Michael Ash collection at the Cranbrook Institute, Michigan (Bought at the Hudson's Bay Company store in Seattle. 11" x 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ ". Concave back. Photo by M.B. 210-4,5, 1950. Not shown).

Three fine totems of the 1900-1920 period by the same carver. Formerly part of the Deasy collection they were recorded in the Ash collection at the Cranbrook Institute, Michigan. The figures are (from left to right and top to bottom) as follows: (1) A human face with a twisted cedar-bark ring on the crown of the head; Raven; Bear. (2) Wasco, Raven, Bear Mother, and a cub. (3) The Eagle (whose mortised bill has fallen off); Grizzly; Raven with two frogs dangling from his bill; a human face presumably meant for the Raven's son; the



Beaver with his poplar stick and a human face instead of his checkered tail (10" high. The left has a concave back; the others, straight. Photo by M.B. 212-6, 1950. *No. 100*).

Three more totems by the same unidentified carver, part of the Cranbrook Institute collections. Figures: (1) A seal on the head of the Woman with a wide labret, possibly Shark-Woman; Wasco. (2) Killer-Whale, Raven, and Grizzly. (3) Grizzly with Frog, Raven, Grizzly (Height: 11¼", 10", 8". Photo by M.B. 213-1,2, 1950. Not shown).

Also in the Cranbrook collection and by the same carver are three totems— (1) Eagle, Raven and Frog, Beaver (Photo by M.B. 212-4, 1950. Not shown). (2) Raven, Frog, Killer-Whale, Grizzly (Photo by M.B. 213-4, 1950. Not shown). (3) Raven, Frog, Whale, Wasco (Photo by M.B. 213-3, 1950. Not shown).

In the same collection, a smoking pipe and a totem. It was purchased by Michael Ash at the Hudson's Bay Company store in Seattle. The carvings on the pipe represent a beast with wings; a bird on its back with open beak; Frog with a woman on its back. The totem (not shown) depicts a human being and the Grizzly (Photo by M.B. 211-1, 1950. *No. 101*).

A splendid totem in wood by the Skidegate carver Wesley, who lived (about 1899) at Kitimat on the mainland is in the Rev. G. H. Raley's collection at Vancouver. It illustrates the Nanasimgyet or Orpheus myth. From the top down: the protecting Eagle; Whale; Nanasimgyet, the pursuing husband on the back of another Whale; Grizzly crest; and Whale (Cf. *Haida Myths*. No. 266. Also for other totems by Wesley, in the same collection: Nos. 264, 265. Photos 87241, 87242. Not shown).

A totem in wood is in an American collection, presumably the American Museum of Natural History, New York. From the top down: Grizzly; Wasco or Sea Wolf with his two Whales; Beaver (*No. 102*).

A small argillite totem in the Lipsett collection, Vancouver, attributed by Alfred Adams to John Cross or George Smith, of Skidegate shows the Shark with its tail upwards, and the Beaver (Photos 87300, 87301. Not shown).



102. Wooden totem with Grizzly, Wasco, Beaver (Am. Mus. Nat. Hist.)





103. Grizzly, Raven, Frog, Bear Mother  
(Lipsett coll., Vancouver)

cub under human form. (Right) Grizzly with a Seal in his arms, Raven with Frog, Grizzly devouring a fish (Photos: 87292, 87293. *No. 103*).

Also in the Lipsett-Ryan collection, two tall and interesting totems may be attributed to John Cross. They show (from the top down): (Left) Wasco or Sea-Wolf with his two Whales; Raven who had lost his beak, which is hanging down below his lower lip; Bear and Raven in his lap. (Right) Grizzly biting the tail of the Halibut, and a face resting on his head; Nanasimgyet's wife holding with both hands onto the dorsal fin of the Whale (Photos: 87294, 87295. *No. 104*).

Another totem in the same collection, attributed to John Cross by his two sons, and erroneously by Henry Young to Thomas Moody, represents a man on the head of the Thunderbird and the Whale in the clutches of the bird (Photos: 87302, 87303. Not shown).

A small totem in the Lipsett collection shows Grizzly Bear, Raven with his broken bill hanging down, and Grizzly kidnapping the young woman (Photo: 87297. Not shown).

Another totem in the same collection, shows the Eagle or the Raven with a small furred animal crouching on his head, and the Beaver (Not shown).

An argillite totem in the Rev. W. E. Collison's collection at Prince Rupert in 1939 represents the Whale and a human face—presumably Nanasimgyet—on the head of another Whale (Photo 87432. Not shown).

Two other important totems are in the Lipsett-Ryan collection, Vancouver. A group of figures are compressed upon the shaft in a way that reminds one of John Cross's work. It was erroneously attributed by Henry Young to Thomas Moody. (From the top down): (Left) the Grizzly holding a small animal, head down; Raven with Frog; Bear Mother with one



One more totem, presumably in the same collection and by the same carver, contains Grizzly, Grizzly and Frog, and Sea Bear (Qagwaai), out of whose mouth Raven is emerging (Not shown).

A tall totem that Alfred Adams termed "the Raven and Sun," in the Raley collection, Vancouver, shows Thunderbird with his prey, the Whale crosswise in his talons; Grizzly with tongue protruding into the Frog's mouth below; Raven holding the Sun in his bill; Grizzly at the base of the pole; two Wascos or Whales with double dorsal fin in an encounter head-on, in low relief, on the round block on which the pole stands (Not shown).

A small, rather crude pole of recent production shows a seal's head (?) at the top; Raven face to face with Frog, a small human face peering from under his right wing; and Grizzly biting a long fish, which he holds in his paws (Not shown).

A totem in the Lipsett collection was carved about 1920 by Titus Campbell, a Tsimshian of the lower Skeena River—the only one ever known to have been attempted, though not quite successfully, by any but a Haida carver. It shows the Thunderbird holding in his talons a human face set inside a halo above the Whale (Photos: 87364, 87365. Not shown).

A totem representing a person and a Grizzly belongs to the Michael Ash collection of the Cranbrook Institute, Michigan (Photo by M.B. 211-1,2, 1950. Not shown).

Another small argillite totem, with Grizzly Bear eating fish, and the Whale, is in the Lipsett collection, Vancouver (87423. Not shown).



104. Wasco, Raven, Grizzly, Nanasimgyet  
(Lipsett coll., Vancouver)



### GEORGE SMITH ( -1938)

George Smith belonged to the Thunderbird clan, which owns the Whale and the Snag as crests. He moved from Cumshewa to Skidegate, but his forebears had originally come from Neesto—Hippah Island—on the Northwest Coast. They were called "Children-of-Neesto (Nastoq'iganaai)." After the fur traders had made their appearance and the Sea-Otter dwindled in numbers, these Neesto people migrated south to Tsahl at Canoe Pass. Later they moved to Maud Island (Krhæne) where they established a village facing Skidegate. When George Smith was about twelve years old, his people crossed over to live at Skidegate. Little has been recorded of him except his work, much of which can be recognized. After learning the art from an uncle at Tsahl, who carved real totem poles, he became one of the best craftsmen of Skidegate, and, in the Rev. Mr. Gillett's opinion, "he was a real good carver, being paid \$1.00 per inch, when the others got \$0.75 . . . He died in 1938, very old, and feeble." A number of his totem poles and plates have been identified with the help of an old photograph at the National Museum of Canada (*No. 105*).

His finest totem in argillite was found in Mrs. Edward Lipsett's private collection in Vancouver. She recognized his work. It ranks among the most typical samples of the old school in the 1870's, with its detached Eagle or Thunderbird, wings half spread out, perched on a *skyil* column consisting



105. A collection of argillite carvings by George Smith (old photo)



of three cylinders. The *skyils* rest on the head of the Beaver, who sits erect without the usual poplar stick in his paws.

Another column of three cylinders crowns the head of a noble Raven as a halo would, and the Frog hangs from the Raven's bill. The Grizzly Bear, supporting the whole structure on his head, is an outstanding characterization of the King of the northern Rockies (87360. No. 106).

Three of George Smith's totem poles, in the Raley collection at Vancouver (identified by Alfred Adams), give a good idea of his individual standards in carving. The tallest of the three represents the Thunderbird with the Whale in his talons, at the top. Below him is the Three-finned Hagwelah or sea-monster, with his forked tail turned up on his belly, and small human creatures—one crawling out of his mouth, the other facing forward on his head. Above the base, Wasco is sitting up, a whale within his uplifted tail and



106. Thunderbird, Beaver,  
and Grizzly  
(Lipsett coll., Vancouver)



107. Thunderbird, Whale, and sea monster  
(Raley coll., Vancouver)



another across his fierce mouth. Although there is nothing very new in these figures, they show spirit and great skill (*No. 107*).

The second pole by George Smith in the Raley collection reverts to the familiar Wasco concept (*No. 108* left). It shows the monster as he carries away three whales instead of the usual two, one on top of his head, another sideways from his mouth, and a third held up by his wolf-like tail. One of the cleverest illustrations of this myth, Wasco was at the same time the crest of a few Haida families in Massett and Skidegate. The bird in the centre of the pole is the Raven in one of his most dignified stylizations, upturned tail like an open fan and wings drooping on both sides. Displaying incisors, the Beaver, sitting next to the base, poplar stick in his paws and face in tail, is well presented, though not so strikingly as he often appears elsewhere. The forward motion in the shoulder and the leg is typical of Smith's treatment; it helps in distinguishing his work from that of a Neeslant or John Cross, which it resembles.

The third pole (*No. 108* right), slightly smaller than the others, is the most individual of the three, because the carver's drooping lines show the feathers in the wings of the Raven. The Raven, at the top, holds a tiny halibut in his bill and carries the Frog on his head. The two bear-like animals below were said by Alfred Adams to have been meant for the semi-human form of the Raven, who went about fashioning the world in the beginning and transforming himself at will.

One pole in the Lipsett collection was attributed by the owner to George Smith. The figures are compact and strikingly expressive. The Bear at the top bites the Frog, whose head he holds down. In the Raven's bill and between his wings we see a fine human face, presumably meant for the stolen sun. The Beaver, sitting at the base, gnaws his poplar stick, and his upturned tail contains an animal face instead of the usual checkered decoration (87359. *No. 109*).

Two poles by George Smith are found in the Raley and the Lipsett collections in Vancouver. The Thunderbird in the Raley



108. Wasco, Raven, Beaver  
(Raley coll., Vancouver)



specimen holds the Whale between his wings, which are stretched forward. The Raven, with the face of the Bear, supports his broken bill under his chin, as in the Halibut episode of the Creation myth; his feathers serve him as a skirt. The animal next to the base is the Bear in sitting position (87301. Not shown). In the Lipsett pole, the small whale with a jutting fin lies on the head of a bear-like monster, whose tongue protrudes and who holds in his arms the Frog, head down. This is a loose paraphrase on the Wasco theme: a repetition of Wasco (with a small being in his mouth) which appears above the base of the pole (Not shown).

A totem pole at the National Museum of Canada may fall into George Smith's set, because of the features it has in common with those under analysis. The Eagle sits at the top. Nanasimgyet, below, is similar to two others mentioned below. The hunter's wife, with a wide labret in the lower lip, clasps the bent dorsal fin of the Killer-Whale under her feet. And the Whale with an unusually long snout holds up his tail with his two bear-like forepaws (9". Aaronson collection. Cf. *Haida Myths*. No. 255).

In another pole, grasping the Frog, head down on his body, the Bear sits at the top. The Raven, with fan-like tail upturned, bites the sun, and the Bear shows his teeth as he sits next to the base. The faces, particularly those at the right, are wide and rather loosely characterized. Yet they show remarkable freedom in the grouping of figures, and unity in the arrangement of details.

Other totem poles in the Lipsett-Ryan collection at Vancouver may be attributed to George Smith. They are typical of his style, although Adams would not go further than to ascribe them to John Cross or George Smith or Tom Price, adding, "The three were pretty much the same." In one of them we find the Thunderbird carrying a Whale on his head. The Beaver, sitting below, gnaws a stick; his body, less squat than usual, is partly covered with a long checkered tail. The compass-made eyes are surrounded by a double line, an exceptional feature; and the hind legs are slightly turned in.

One more pole in the Lipsett collection contains the Shark at the top with a single gill slit on the forehead; the body erect; the fins, tail, and all accessories as customary at Skidegate. The Beaver, next to the base, is like that on a previous pole except for the eyes, which are ordinary; the body is squat, as usual.



109. Grizzly, Frog, Raven, and Beaver (Lipsett coll., Vancouver)



A pole collected on the islands about 1920 by the late Hugh McKay of Winnipeg may be attributed to George Smith, because of its striking resemblance to the previous examples from Skidegate. The Grizzly holding on to the *skyil* cylinders on the head of the Raven below him, sits at the top; the eyes of the Bear are quite realistic. In the centre, on the up-turned tail of the Raven is a large human face. The Beaver at the base is much like the other Beavers by the same carver.

One of the finest poles by George Smith shows at the top the Grizzly devouring a salmon. On the Raven's head, below, stands a short *skyil*; the Raven holds in his bill the tail of the salmon, on whose back appears



110. Grizzly, Raven,  
Wasco, Grizzly



111. Grizzly, Raven and Sun, Grizzly, Thunderbird  
(Raley coll., Vancouver)



a small head of the Raven. Wasco is in the middle of the shaft with his two fish—this time, a salmon and a shark. And at the base the Grizzly bites the back of the Frog, which hangs head down (*No. 110*).

The bear-like Bull-Frog on all fours, at the base, characterizes two other fine poles attributed to George Smith, in the Collison collection at Prince Rupert. The second is at the Canadian Handicrafts Guild in Montreal. The myth of the Raven stealing the Sun is illustrated in the centre of the Collison specimen. Here the ball of light is represented by an ivory inset under the raven's right wing. Above, the Grizzly, whose lower parts are human-like, sits while devouring a salmon (87430, 87431. Not shown).

The Bull-Frog appears, again associated with the Grizzly with protruding tongue, in the lower half of the totem, which is at the Canadian Handicrafts Guild. The Raven in the middle is biting a fish; the Bear at the top is eating a halibut, tail first (Not shown).

Two more argillite poles in the Raley collection, Vancouver, may also be attributed to George Smith. At the top of the first pole, the Grizzly appears with the Frog, head down, in front of his body. The Raven, holding the Sun in his bill, is below. And at the base the Grizzly is repeated. In the second pole, the Thunderbird or Eagle stands at the top. The Grizzly is in the middle. And at the base the Raven holds the Sun in his bill, a significant feature of the episode of the theft of the Sun in the myth of Creation (87234. *No. 111*).

A recently-made wooden totem pole in the Collison collection at Prince Rupert also forms part of the set by George Smith, although it was not carved by him, at least not wholly. Here the wood is covered by a coat of commercial paint, which detracts from its plastic quality. Yet it is as original and expressive as any of the wood carvings made for Dr. Swanton in 1904 by Edensaw and reproduced in the Jesup *Memoir on the Haidas*. In this wooden pole we find a comprehensive illustration of the Nanasingyet myth so often utilized in the past sixty years. As this pole was carved only a few years ago, it proves that the vitality of Haida art was not then completely lost. Here we find portrayed a few episodes of the myth already outlined: the hunter's wife with labret in the lower lip, who was kidnapped by the Killer-Whale, holds on to the dorsal fin; her hunter husband sits above, with a Sea-Otter standing between his knees and two wild geese on the other side and with an unidentified hunting implement in his left hand; the hunter appears again below, his mouth open in surprise or grief, a carved fish club or priest in his left hand. The Crane, his spirit protector during the quest for his wife at sea, stands protectively at the top, wings spread out, over and around him. And the Killer-Whale, next to the base, is biting a seal, which is head down; his inverted tail is being bitten by another seal or a sea-lion, whose head is shown upside down. This wooden pole is akin to George Smith's work. The curved dorsal fin that the kidnapped wife is anxiously grasping is similar to those seen above. The style on the whole is Tsimshyan-like, rather than Haida, a trait due to the habit Smith had of borrowing ideas from the mainland tribes. This peculiar carving was said by the Rev. Mr. Collison to have been made by Luke Watson of Skidegate, in collaboration with Robert Smith of the same tribe—Robert presumably was a misnomer for George. It may be assumed





112. Argillite pipe with Wasco  
(Lipsett coll., Vancouver)

that it was executed by Luke Watson, a younger carver and canoe maker, under the direction of George Smith, who still had the inspiration but was otherwise too feeble to hold the chisel (About 5' high. Cf. *Haida Myths*, p. 299. No. 267).

Two compact poles of fair size in the Raley collection at Vancouver may be ascribed

to George Smith. In the first, the Eagle with a large head is sitting at the top. The animal below has a long upturned snout, quite unknown on the islands. It is meant for the Mountain Goat. The figure below the Mountain Goat is the hunter's wife, who has an animal-like face with open mouth showing the tongue and who holds on with hands and knees to the curved dorsal fin of the Whale. But the Whale, sitting up and biting the tail of the Sea-Otter, looks like the Bear.

The two figures at the top of the next pole are exceptional ones in Haida art. They were borrowed from the repertory of the Niskæ and Gitksan of the upper Nass and Skeena rivers. The Mountain Goat is mainly characterized by his short stubby horns, between which a short *skyil* pillar of cylinders stands. The cross-hatching on the lower part of the horns and in the middle of the cylinders is ornamental. The upturned snout belongs to the Goat as well as to the Wolf, both mainland quadrupeds recently introduced as crests among the Haida through the Cumsheewa tribe. The Mountain Goat came to them together with the Grizzly Bear and the Snag or Tsamaos, from Tsyebasæ of Gitrhahla Island, close to the estuary of the Skeena River. The topmost figure is the Squirrel Tsenhlæk with a pine cone between his front paws. The Squirrel is connected with the stirring story of the volcanic eruption near the canyon of the Nass, about a hundred and fifty years ago. The Squirrel appears in a few Tsimshyan carvings and actual totem poles, one of which stands at Kitwanga on the upper Skeena, and another on the Gitlarhdamks pole in the park overlooking the harbour of Prince Rupert.

The semi-animal semi-human figure in the centre of the same pole is meant for Konakadet, the mythical hero who tore a sea-lion asunder out of sheer strength—a Tlingit version of the Soo'san myth of Massett where the young hunter deceives and ridicules his mother-in-law. Obviously George Smith was widely travelled and did not mind incorporating new themes from abroad in his repertory. The sitting Beaver, next to the base, resembles the one previously seen in a pole by the same carver; here the stick is held in the front paws under the chin.

An argillite pipe with one of the finest illustrations of the Wasco may be attributed to George Smith. It shows, at the opposite end from the stem, the Sea-Wolf holding in his mouth a human being whose face and arms, only, remain outside, and on his back the usual two Whales, one of them held by the tail of the monster (In the Lipsett-Ryan collection at Vancouver. Photo N.M.C. 87285. No. 112).

Chests or boxes, houses, plates, and more totems from his hands are studied in other chapters under different captions (For other carvings possibly by him, cf. *Haida Myths*. Nos. 66, 134, 141, 147, 326).



## THE KLOO AND TANU CARVERS

The Kloo and Tanu tribes of the southern Haida formed a bridgehead between the Queen Charlotte Islands and the Tsimshyan and the Kwakiutl mainland. The islanders received at least as much by way of cultural traits in myths, tales, and crests as they gave in exchange. And after 1785 these islanders were among the leaders in the annals of the fur trade, thereby gaining access to European trade goods and influences.

Lovatt Miller and Thomas Moody were the best carvers of argillite in this southeastern school; other noted Kloo carvers were the Jones brothers (studied in a separate chapter in this book). They are all well remembered. Information about them was best recorded through Arthur Moody of the later generation, who was consulted by the author in 1939 at Prince Rupert, where Moody spent part of the summer in the McRea Brothers' store, carving totems for the tourist trade.

Arthur Moody was one of two clan brothers or cousins who were expert carvers. In 1939, at the age of 54 years, Arthur Moody stated that his family originally came from old Kloo or Tanu (outside the present Lockport) near Skidegate. His maternal uncle was Kwisakuwas of the Wolf crest in the Raven phratry.

### LOVATT MILLER

It was from Lovatt Miller, a Thunderbird of Gold Harbour, formerly of Kloo, that Arthur Moody learned his craft. Miller's Haida name was Kwisakuwas, like his uncle's, and his function in later years was that of "First Speaker" for the whole family (gwizukunahl). His father belonged to the Eagles. Miller died about 1927-9, at the age of about 75.

If the argillite totem collected by Mr. Hugh McKay of Winnipeg about 1920 is, as presumed, really by Lovatt Miller in his last ten years, he certainly was among the best craftsmen of his generation (Photo by M.B. J. 275D. No. 113). In this specimen the figures are as follows: at the base the Thunderbird holds the Whale crosswise in his talons; a chief with a Mongolian hat sits on the bird's head; the Raven and the Grizzly are above.

An outstanding Miller totem is now part of the Paul Rabut collection. It is on a par with the best produced at Skidegate in the period after 1880. Its figures are the same as in the one above, but in this



113. Grizzly, Eagle, chief, Thunderbird (Hugh McKay coll., Winnipeg)





114. Eagle, Grizzly, Raven, chief, Thunderbird (Paul Rabut coll. and photo)



one the high relief is more marked. The Thunderbird's bill is an added piece, mortised in. On the sides, two small Frogs dangle from the Raven's bill, and a large frog hangs down the whole length of his body from the Grizzly's mouth above. The Eagle or Thunderbird sits at the top (Height  $19\frac{1}{2}$ ". Photo by Rabut. No. 114).

Another fine totem in the Miller style was found in the collection of the Rev. G. H. Raley in Vancouver. It represents (from the top down) the Raven, Shark-Woman with her domed forehead holding a Shark in front of her, and the Thunderbird at the base (87269. Not shown).

### HENRY MOODY AND JOSEPH MOODY

These two craftsmen belonged together, at the turn of the last century. They were leaders of Skedans on the southeast coast of Queen Charlotte Islands, whose forebears once had been the allies of the head-chiefs of the Gitrhahla tribe of the Tsimshian on Porcher Island. Through them as middlemen, the Haida used to trade with the Tsimshian of the Skeena River to the east, and with Bella Bella (northern Kwakiutl) down the coast. The cultural influence of these coastal neighbours entered the island in this way from the east and the southeast.

The crests of the Mountain Goat (*matih*), the Grizzly Bear (*rhaotse*), and the Wasco (the Sea-Wolf and Bear monster) and accompanying ritual songs were acquired by the chiefs of the Skedans and neighbouring Tanu tribes of the Haida. In time they descended to the Moody family from their maternal uncles whose ancient names also were received from the Gitrhahla—Neeswairhs, Tseebasæ, Hale, and Shaiks—all four of them belonging first to the Gispewudwade or sea phratry of the coast Tsimshian.

Henry Moody's name as a child was Gandonge, and as the head-chief of Skedans he was known until his death as Neeswairhs. Another high name of his was Nehlanneyooens<sup>1</sup> or Nehlan-nelay, Mountain-Grizzly. He was reported as a good carver of totem poles, also of totems to sell.<sup>2</sup> His monument, on a grave stone in the Skidegate cemetery, bears the inscription:

"Henry Moody Chief of Skedans village, drowned at Lawn Hill, Dead Tree Point, March 5, 1945. Age seventy-three years. Grace, wife of Henry Moody, died March 15, 1944, aged seventy."

Joseph Moody's name as a boy was Hlqagoie, and as a chief he bore the famous name of Cumshewaw, well known to the earliest sea traders. "He carved stone and any material; and he was an old man, when he died."

### THOMAS MOODY

Thomas Moody, an Eagle whose ancient name was Gitrhun (Salmon-Eater) and who also was chief of the Tanu tribe, died of cancer at the age of 75 (some said 87) at the Prince Rupert hospital in 1947. He spoke English and the Chinook jargon as well as his own native language. Born in Tanu, he had been taken by his parents to Skidegate about 1890, when

<sup>1</sup> So said old Mrs. Susan Williams at Skidegate in 1947. She was Henry Moody's sister.

<sup>2</sup> According to Henry Young of Skidegate, who saw him carve the Gitehun'kas Thunderbird totem pole and other totems, among them that of the Eagle.



he was still a child; his family was the last to leave their old village. In his later years he carved a great deal—mostly argillite and silver rings. But he must have made a number of actual totem poles, for they closely resemble his miniature totems (Cf. *Totem Poles*. Volume II. Nos. 250, 258–262). He used to say, "Silver is clean work; stone, hard." The elders of his nation did not see much difference between his style and that of Louis Collison and of John Cross and attributed to them some totems that others credited to him.

A fine hollow-back totem by him was collected by Powell in 1879 and forms part of the National Museum collection at Ottawa. Signed "Tom" at the back, it illustrates the myth of Qagwaai and Dzelarhons<sup>1</sup> or, as it is also called, the "Story of Cape St. James." The figure at the base is the "Deep-water-Grizzly"; its head is typically that of the Tanu Grizzly with long drooping tongue, but the tail is that of the Whale turned upward. Above, we see Qagwaai with the Whale (and Raven inside) dangling from his mouth, and his body with a dorsal fin and tail turned over his head (19½", base 3": VII-B-830. Photo 88961. No. 115).

Among other argillite totems that may be attributed to him are the following:

No. 116, where the Beaver sits at the top, with long incisors and three cylinders on his head; the Bear holds the tail of a seal (?) in his mouth.

Shark-Woman, with the three gills on her domed forehead and with the labret, appears in a totem, at whose base sits the Beaver in his usual

<sup>1</sup> According to Henry Young of Skidegate.



115. Myth of Qagwaai and Dzelarhons illustrated (Nat. Mus. Can.)



116. Beaver, Bear, and Seal





117. Shark-Woman and Beaver



118. Raven, Grizzly, Beaver, Grizzly and Frog, Beaver (Am. Mus. Nat. Hist.)





19. Thunderbird and  
Whale, Beaver  
(U.S. Nat. Mus.,  
Washington)

manner, with his checkered tail upturned on his belly, the poplar stick in his forepaws, the incisors long enough (in Tanu style) to cover his chin, and three cylinders on his head (Photo 99686. *No. 117*).

Two totems at the American Museum of Natural History in New York may be attributed to him; they are typically in his style. The one at the left consists of the Raven at the top with four cylinders on his head; the Grizzly, next; and at the base the Beaver. The totem to the right is more elaborate and a particularly fine one. On the head of the Grizzly, at the top, sits three chiefs with conical hats surmounted by two or three *skyils*. From the Grizzly's mouth the Frog hangs, as also a small man, head down. Below, the Beaver with the long incisors, typical of Tanu, sits up, his checkered tail upward, decorated with a small human face; a face and pair of hands cover his chest, and three or four disks stand on his head (Photo by A.M.N.H. 41938. 16/A1-555. *No. 118*).

Another fine totem collected by James G. Swan in 1883 belongs to the U.S. National Museum. The bird perched at the top is the Eagle or Thunderbird; the figure next is the Whale; the bird below, the Raven; and the Beaver with three *skyils* at the base shows his typical Tanu incisors—they are like Henry Moody's signature (Cat. No. 73,117. Photo by U.S.N.M. 5,293. *No. 119*).

On a totem of argillite the weeping-woman shedding tears, in company with Shark-Woman wearing a labret in her lower lip, is associated with the Beaver whose long incisors are in the Thomas Moody style (N.M.C. 99685. Cf. *Haida Myths*. No. 28).

Two argillite boxes are also from him, as follows:

The first, at the McGill University Museum,<sup>1</sup> is marked inside the lid: "Carved by Thomas Moody, Skidegate Mission, B.C." The Frog squats crosswise on the cover, and the Grizzly with tongue protruding and with head and face in high relief decorates the front (6¼" x 5½" x 4⅓". Photo 92052. Not shown).

The other box is decorated with the face of Shark-Woman. The three gill marks are on her domed forehead, and the labret is in her lower lip. The rest of the engravings on all sides belong likewise to the Shark (Photo by Arthur Price. *No. 120*).

As late as 1944 Thomas Moody carved a wooden totem pole, 60 inches tall, for Charles Valley of Queen Charlotte City.

<sup>1</sup> Marked: "Received in 1928 from the Canadian Handicrafts Guild, Montreal."



## ARTHUR MOODY

Arthur Moody was the son<sup>1</sup> of Thomas Moody, an Eagle, and his Haida name as a child was Tilstingwaws. His crest was the Wolf of old Kloo or Gitrhun village. He learned carving from Lovatt Miller, a Thunderbird, who at the time lived at Coal Harbour on the west coast of Skidegate channel. "Miller was about 76 when he died about 1928," Moody said. "The first totem

pole he taught me to carve was when I was 16 years old. He laughed at me because I could not carve the Raven beak; it looked funny, it made him laugh. He was a quick carver. He carved only slate, not any large totem pole."

When consulted by the author in Prince Rupert in 1939, Arthur Moody said, "Most of the Skidegate people, in the old days, knew how to carve slate (argillite), and many carvers used it. The exceptions were very few. But this is not true of Tanu, where slate carving was not common, for it began in Skidegate, close to Slatechuck creek. Other villages made wooden totem poles, not slate. At the time, totems usually were made of wood. So I have heard. It was after the white people began to come, a hundred years ago, maybe more, that slate was found. It was in Skidegate inlet that those things happened. And slate was carved just to sell to the strangers: it never was kept."

Arthur Moody "was a poor carver when I first knew him, but he has improved since." So declared the Reverend Mr. Gillett, at first a missionary among the Haida, who in 1939 became Indian Agent at Prince Rupert. Mr. Gillett owned a small pole by Arthur Moody, also one by Tom Moody. The pole by Tom, 7 inches high, is of good quality and is nicely polished. Its figures are, from top to bottom, the Bear holding a salmon across his mouth, the Thunderbird, the Grizzly Bear, and a small frog. All these were owned as crests by his family.

The most important piece attributed to Arthur Moody by Mrs. Edward Lipsett of Vancouver, who owned it, is a totem pole of fine quality, 22 inches high, one of the tallest in existence. The crests of the carver's father and mother are united in this pole, just as they often were in Charlie Edensaw's work. The Eagle, with wings half spread out, is perched on the three *skyil* cylinders that the Kyusta Eagles had a right to place on the Beaver's head. The Beaver sits up under the Eagle and grasps the column of three cylinders on the head of the large Eagle in the middle of the shaft, who holds a Frog, head down, in his beak. The large Grizzly Bear, representing the mother's clan, sits next to the base. The composition and the refinement of these figures rank high. Yet Moody did not wholly invent



120. Shark Woman box

<sup>1</sup> According to Henry Young, Thomas Moody was his stepfather.





121. Argillite candle-holders, totems  
(Lipsett-Ryan coll., Vancouver)

any of them nor even their attitudes. But the handling is fairly original, and his personal touch is in evidence. His work has character, particularly in the treatment of the Grizzly Bear and the Eagle (Photo 87360, 87361. Cf. 356?).

Several argillite totems of fair size and quality (photographed about 1910), where the Grizzly, Eagle, Frog, and Beaver are similar to those in his large totem in the Lipsett collection, may be attrib-

uted, if not to Arthur Moody himself, at least to his Skidegate contemporaries.

Smaller pieces of fair quality, attributed to Moody by Alfred Adams and Mrs. Edward Lipsett, are in the form of candle-holders, grave posts, tiny totems, and detached figures. The sitting Grizzly Bear, eyes inlaid with abalone shell, may have been meant for the sea monster Wasco, with his usual quarry: two fish or animals; one of them looks like a frog. The grave post is made in the image of the Grizzly; its crossboard at the top represents the Thunderbird with a hooked bill. The taller of the two small poles shows the Raven and the Bear, the latter eating a salmon. A tiny statuette is of the Killer-Whale with a long dorsal fin (Lipsett-Ryan collection, Vancouver. No. 121).

A small square plate, showing the Starfish or Ska'm with four rays, a human face on the body with two arms, and abalone shell eyes, was attributed to both Arthur and Thomas Moody.

Two highly decorated plates in oval form in the Lipsett-Ryan collection at Vancouver may be attributed to the Moody 'brothers'. The first of these, ascribed to either Arthur or Tom Moody, was considered by Alfred Adams "a crude carving." Its flat rim is ornamented with inlays of opercula, the Haida name of which is *gwuhlkyidang*. These shells, or rather parts of shells, were secured around the Queen Charlotte Islands and have been used for many years in native inlays. The design in this plate, not so crude as Adams' remark might lead us to believe, is the reinterpretation of an episode in the Raven myth of Creation. The Raven is shown inside the body of the Whale, his bill forward; his tail with a large eye centre and three feathers spread out. His wings are open behind his head, one above it, the other below. There are three pointed wing feathers attached to each shoulder with an eye design. The blunt head of the Whale occupies one end of the plate; his tail is turned back at the opposite end, and a large fin is spread under the forepart of the body. Although not quite comparable to the work of the leading craftsmen of a former generation, the design and line work here are creative and creditable (Not shown).

The second plate, more elaborate than the first, was attributed by Mrs. Lipsett, the owner, to Arthur Moody. It was said to illustrate the Tsimshian myth of the sorcerer woman and the woodworm or caterpillar, already illustrated by Chapman. The engraved background shows Hagwelawrh, the sea monster with two fins (a Skidegate counterpart of Wasco),



and it is repeated twice. For its quality and size, this specimen ranks as high as the work of an earlier generation (20" x 13". Not shown).

A small totem with the Raven and the Salmon, and the Bear with the Frog was attributed by Henry Young to Arthur Moody. Yet it may be by John Cross, according to his two sons Rae and Gordon (Lipsett collection, Vancouver. Photos 87306, 87307. Not shown).

Two candle-holders in the Lipsett collection may also be from the hands of Arthur Moody in his approaching old age. They represent Bear Mother and the cubs (Photos. 87304, 87305. Not shown).

A totem 14 inches high attributed to Arthur Moody, in the Beatty private collection at Queen Charlotte City, represents—from the top down—the Eagle, the Whale, the Raven with the house of Beaver, and the Beaver. The price marked on it was \$40. Two 12-inch totems in the same collection, also attributed to Arthur Moody, show the Bear, the Raven, the Thunderbird, the Whale, and the Eagle, in one totem; and the Killer-Whale, the Raven, the Thunderbird, and the Whale, in the second.

For the benefit of summer tourists, Arthur Moody was photographed by the author while at work in the shop window of McRea's store in Prince Rupert in 1939. Against a display of his own work in partly painted totems of wood, he was actually carving argillite (Photo by M.B., 68-5 in 1939. Not shown).

## PAUL JONES AND MOSES JONES

( -1926)

Paul Jones of Skidegate produced a great deal of argillite work and died a "very old" man about 1926 or 1927. The work of his brother Moses, also a craftsman, cannot easily be differentiated from his. Their forebears, like those of John Cross (Neeslant), belonged to Tanu on the east coast, a short distance south of Skidegate, and Tanu was the jumping-off point to the Skeena River estuary on the mainland. Like so many other master carvers, Paul and Moses Jones were members of an Eagle or Thunderbird clan, whose ancestry went back to the migratory tribes of Alaska.

A number of argillite totems, identified by Alfred Adams and others, bring out the features of Paul Jones's contribution. Adams as a tradesman "handled quite a bit" of his work as a middleman and expressed the opinion that it was "a bit crude."

A first pole in the Lipsett-Ryan collection at Vancouver, wide at the base and tapering toward the top, contains four human faces typical of his style. They are characterized by a high aquiline or broken nose, low forehead, very wide, outstretched mouth with realistic thick lips. The iris of the eyes usually slant down markedly. The long-fingered hands and feet, turned up or down and often joined together in a repeated pattern, enable one to easily recognize his totems. They are typical, though not among the most prized. The Shark or Dogfish is the figure sitting just over





122. The Shark or Dogfish totem,  
by Paul Jones  
(Lipsett coll., Vancouver)

the base. Three gills appear on the cheeks, a dome over the head, and a few fins on the upper part of the body. The other human figures above it remain doubtful, even to Adams, who failed to recognize them (87290, 87291. *No. 122*).

A second pole contains the same Dogfish crest at the centre, with a higher than usual dome over the forehead. Its human face is much like the previous ones, here with a pair of three short gills on the cheeks, and a reduced fish body and a side fin in the form of a wing. At the base of the pole, the Thunderbird, to whom Alfred Adams here gave the Tsimshian name of Ske'esu (Skaimsem), clutches the Whale across the body, almost hiding it under his wings and talons. This excellent stylization, with the sharp hooked nose, reveals the good lineage of the craftsman. Much power is shown in the Thunderbird, as well as in the wise-looking Raven at the top of the same pole (87268, 87269. Not shown).

A pole in the Collison collection at Prince Rupert, also with three figures, shares most of the same traits. The man at the top is animal-like with his large nose, bulging cheeks, and bulbous nostrils. Repeated and increased in size next to the base, he displays his long-fingered hands

and toes in an interesting inverted pattern. The central figure is no doubt meant for the Dogfish, with a dome over the head and feather-like fins. Yet its exceptionally large open mouth with the Frog inside suggests another monster, often repeated in a number of poles presumably from the same source. This Frog-in-the-large-mouth motif and the human face with high nose and bulging cheeks are the two preferences of this Skidegate carver. The Grizzly Bear is at the base (87430, 87431. Not shown).

The sea monster with a cavernous open mouth reappears in a short pole, consisting of only two bizarre figures, in the Lipsett-Ryan collection at Vancouver. Identified by Alfred Adams as the work of Paul Jones, it





123. Grizzly and Frog, Raven, and Grizzly repeated (Paul Rabut coll.)



was explained as alluding to an ancient tradition—a custom consisting of pulverizing dried-up toads<sup>1</sup> and diluting the pulp in a liquid for a potion to cure varied ailments, rheumatism in particular. Over the squarish dome on the forehead of this being squats another unidentified animal with a long snout, slanting upward, and long finger-like claws supporting the chin (87302, 87303. Not shown).

In an impressive pole of the Lipsett-Ryan collection at Vancouver, probably by the same carver, two episodes of the Creation myth were interpreted in the Edensaw manner. The Raven in the centre holds the sun crosswise in his bill, and another Raven below supports in his hands his broken bill. The Bear-like monster above is meant for Wasco, with one Whale hanging down from his mouth and between his paws; the other is on his head. In quality it is only slightly inferior to Edensaw's work.

A totem pole in a different style, belonging to the Raley collection at Vancouver, was also attributed by Adams to Paul Jones. Here the Shark with a broad bevelled snout and a dorsal fin with a human face at its broad base is held by the tail between the arms of a man whose face is slightly twisted in distress. This character can be none other than the Tlingit hero Konakadet, who used to capture sea monsters and cast them up on shore. Biting the back of the Frog, whose head is down, the bird-like creature with a rounded duck-like bill remains unidentified. Its stylization is quite original and attractive.

<sup>1</sup> There are no frogs on the Queen Charlotte Islands, only occasional toads that were brought in unintentionally by white settlers.





Paul Jones obviously could sail under his own colours and could provide striking samples of the art to customers who liked his work, for we notice in the large collection of the late Mr. Deasy, former Indian Agent at Massett, as photographed in 1919, no less than twenty-seven poles showing the Jones individual touch. In more than a score of poles, the monster with a huge open mouth keeps reappearing, nowhere stereotyped, usually terrifying if not grotesque, yet smoothly stylized. The fins of the Dogfish and the gill-marked forehead in the form of a dome, rounded or squarish, usually accompany this sea monster. Sometimes its mouth is filled with sharp teeth or contains a swollen tongue. At other times, it yawns vacantly, in the absence of the customary Frog.

The heraldic animals seen with the Dogfish on the poles by Paul Jones and his brother Moses are the Whale with fan-like tail, the Raven or the Eagle, the Thunderbird with the hooked bill, and the Shark with erect body and tail. The Grizzly seldom appears, the Wolf very rarely, the



127. Figures familiar in the Jones repertory  
(Ash coll.)

←

126. Raven, Grizzly, Beaver  
(Ash coll., Cranbrook Inst.)



Beaver once, and perhaps also the Sea-Lion. In the Deasy collection, Paul Jones assumes a greater stature than might elsewhere have been acknowledged. But this collection was broken up, and its contents were scattered beyond recovery (Photo of the Deasy collection in 1919 by Clyde Patch).

The figures on a number of argillite totems by the Jones brothers may be listed and analysed as follows:

The Raven with his long curved bill stands in the centre of a splendid pole, quite tall, in the Paul Rabut collection. The smaller Bear, holding the Frog, sits at the top. Two monsters with large open mouths and protruding tongues occupy the rest of the space—one at the base of the pole and the other next to the Bear at the top—both clutch the Frog (Nos. 8A, 8B, in the Rabut list. *No. 123*).

The Shark with two gill marks is at the centre of one of the finest poles by Paul Jones. At the top sits the Eagle; the Bear is next to the bottom. It is part of Dr. Max Stern's collection, Dominion Gallery, Montreal (Not shown).

Another pole of about the same size, in Dr. Stern's collection, contains the Wasco sea monster with a smaller whale on his head. The Grizzly Bear sits at the base (Not shown).



129. Raven, Beaver, Bear Mother



128. Other totems by Paul or Moses Jones  
(Ash coll.)



The Shark reappears in a typical Paul Jones pole, collected around 1920 at Massett by Clyde Patch for the National Museum of Canada. The Raven sits at the top, a *skyil* on his head; the Grizzly holding the Frog squats at the bottom (89377. Cf. *Haida Myths*, No. 181).

A fairly tall pole is decorated with the Shark at the base, the Raven in the centre, the Bear above clutching a salmon, and the Eagle at the top—a fine carving (Not shown).

The Shark occurs again in two poles; in one its tail rises in curves above the head of the fish, the Whale is below, next to the base. The large-mouthed monster appears on one of the other three poles of the same group. The Bear is shown with them (*No. 124*).

As the same Shark and sea monster were the favourite crests of Paul and Moses Jones, they keep recurring in other totems (Photo by M.B. 221-6,5 in 1950. In the Michael Ash collection, at the Cranbrook Institute, Michigan. *No. 125*).

In another totem of the Simon Greco collection, the Beaver sits up and holds his poplar stick in his front paws (Photo by Paul Rabut, New York. 13" high. Rabut's No. 6. Not shown).

Two other Beavers, associated with the Bear, the Frog, and the Salmon, and other

130. Bear and Frog, Raven and Salmon, and Grizzly





Bears, occur in the Raley collection, Vancouver (87266, 87267. Not shown).

In an exquisite totem of the Michael Ash collection at the Cranbrook Institute, Michigan, the Raven is perched at the top, over the Grizzly with the Frog; and the Beaver and the human face of the Raven boy is at the bottom (*No. 126*).

In the collection made at Massett in 1920 by Clyde Patch, Ottawa, we see the Thunderbird, the Raven, and the Whale grouped together, one above the other; and a head at the top wears the *skyil* cylinders (89377. Cf. *Haida Myths*. No. 180).

The Raven, the Shark, and the Thunderbird appear together on another specimen of the Lipsett collection in Vancouver (87269. Not shown).

The Grizzly with a human-like figure occupies a smaller totem of the Michael Ash collection at the Cranbrook Institute, Michigan (Photo by M.B. 210-6 211-1 in 1950. Not shown).

The Michael Ash collection at the Cranbrook Institute possesses several other totems from the hands of Paul Jones, Nowhere is he so well represented as in this set, which goes back to the 1820's (Photos by M.B. in 1950: 212-1, 213-1. *Nos. 127, 128*).

Another set of three similar poles by Jones repeats the Raven, the Beaver, the Grizzly, the large-mouthed monster, the man holding a halibut, and Bear Mother (*No. 129*).

Two other totems may also be attributed to Paul or Moses Jones (One only shown (Photo. 87291. *No. 130*).



## LOUIS COLLISON and His Brother, AMOS WATSON

Still living and working in the 1940's, Louis Collison is considered one of the three or four best sculptors of argillite of his time, alongside William Dixon and Charlie Edensaw. His medium of expression was mostly totems, which had become favourites in the curio trade. Yet a few groups of medicine-men are attributed to him, and Bear Mother as well; for instance, in Nos. 92 and 93 in *Haida Myths*. And he is said to have made smoking pipes, some of them in the Deasy and the McKay collections.

He was fond of illustrating the following myths: Bear Mother, Raven, and Nanasimgyet (Cf. *Haida Myths*: Nos. 97, 105, Bear Mother and cubs; Nos. 128, 129, Raven and Sun; No. 139, Raven with Frog; No. 149, Raven and Beaver; Nos. 248, 256, Nanasimgyet and Whale; No. 317, Grizzly, Raven, and Sea-Wolf; No. 320, Bear, Raven, Frog, and Beaver).

Two of his Skidegate contemporaries (Luke Watson and Charlie Gladstone) called him "Thomas," instead of "Louis" Collison. He is known to have been Amos Watson's brother; Amos also carved the same subjects. "They were brothers under different names." Besides, the same informants affirmed that he and Jim Mackay, another good craftsman of the last generation, were brothers. All three had been adopted by different families or had been "given other names."

Amos Watson, one of these three brothers, carved wood as well as argillite, for he chose to live at Kitkatla among the island Tsimshyan<sup>2</sup> for at least a part of his life. To him has been attributed a Raven helmet carved out of red cedar; it represents the Raven holding the Sun in his bill (Cf. *Haida Myths* No. 142). The collection of Paul Rabut (Westport, Connecticut) contains a wooden totem by him which seems unfinished. It illustrates the Thunderbird and Whale myth together with the Eagle and Shark-Woman crests, and the Raven with the Frog hanging from his long bill; painted red and black (Rabut's No. 4A, B, Height,  $32\frac{5}{8}$ " x depth 4" x  $3\frac{1}{2}$ ". Photo by the owner. Not shown).

The Haida chief, wearing on his head a conical hat with two *skyil* cylinders, serves as a link in the attribution to Louis Collison of two more or less similar argillite totems, those of the Thunderbird and Whale (Cf. *Haida Myths*. No. 176) and Gunarh on the Whale (loc. cit., No. 248). These outstanding pieces make it clear that Amos Watson, as long as he used argillite, was not inferior to his brother, "Louis" or "Thomas" Collison. He used to say, according to his contemporaries Gladstone and Luke Watson, "If you carve slate argillite, you also carve wood."

<sup>1</sup> As identified by Luke Watson. Gladstone said, "He always carved pipes," and Luke Watson added, "He always carved Indian doctors."

<sup>2</sup> By Mrs. Edward Lipsett of Vancouver, in 1939.



Amos Watson's daughter, Mrs. Mary Nelly Tulip of Skidegate, added the following information about him: "My father died when I was young, in 1947 [she seemed to be about 60 years old]. His Haida name was Taorennarehl. He had a right to use the Raven and Grizzly-Bear crests. His family came from Cape Ball, and he was related to Charlie Edensaw. The people thought that he was as good a carver as my uncle Edensaw. Louis Collison carved slate, wood, and silver. When he aged, he stopped engraving silver and devoted his time to making wooden models of houses with totem poles standing in the doorway. His carvings were exhibited at the Chicago Fair in 1892, and there he sold a canoe he had made."

Louis Collison's work has been reproduced in *Haida Myths*; in addition to these is a splendid totem of argillite in the collection of the National Museum of Canada: The Grizzly stands at the top, holding in his forepaws the cylinders on the Raven's head. The Raven bites the Frog, placed crosswise in his long curved bill. And the Beaver, sitting next to the base, chews a poplar stick. On his head rise two cylinders, which touch the tip of the Raven's bill (Photo 89444. No. 131).

LOUIS COLLISON,  
THE "LAST OF THE HAIDA CARVERS"

*By Lyn and Richard Harrington*

(Extracts from an article in *Natural History*,  
New York, May, 1949. Pp. 200-205)

... Louis Collison, sixty-year-old Haida Indian of Skidegate Mission, is the last of the old masters. He still works with a true eye and skilled hands, though he says sadly, "My father was better, and his father better still." [Photo by Richard Harrington. No. 132].

Louis himself carves the soft carbonaceous shale only in his spare time or when he feels like it. There's more money to be made with his fishing boat, going out after dogfish livers or trolling for cod or salmon. But when winter brings the furious storms that turn Hecate Strait into a maelstrom



131. Grizzly, Raven, and Beaver  
(Nat. Mus. Can.)





132. Louis Collison at work (Photo by Richard Harrington)

of angry waters, he unearths some of the stone from a storage pit in the back yard and sets to work. His is the best work being produced today, although another ageing, half-blind native may turn out a greater quantity of inferior craftsmanship . . .

Apparently the carving began with dishes, amulets, pipes, and other small objects that were not strictly useful but were real works of art. Some were inlaid with iridescent abalone shell. Even then, travellers bought any they could find . . .

The Haidas found their "slate" carvings excellent items for barter with the mainland tribes, who in turn sold them down the coast to white traders. Wood and argillite carvings made to serve the native intertribal demand soon became important in the eyes of the natives.

Later the carvings became largely totem poles, miniatures from four inches up to twenty-four, though the latter are quite rare. These stone poles stylized the same designs that were used on the tall wooden totem poles. Argillite carvings began around 1820, as far as can be discovered,



and the totem poles did not reach their "golden age" until 1840-60. Wooden totems have not been carved on the Charlottes since 1880. . . .

When we introduced ourselves, Louis Collison was in the process of carving the famous story of how Raven brought light to the dark earth he had created. In the complicated tale, Raven stole first the box of starlight, but that was not enough light. Then he managed to steal the moon, but the earth was still too dark. At long last, he contrived to snatch the box containing the sun and attempted to fly away with it. Unfortunately, he got caught in the smoke hole of the lodge long enough to have his snow-white plumage permanently blackened. But he had light for his earth.

Louis Collison (his name was taken from one of the missionaries of a century ago) spoke infrequently in soft, slurred English. He was distinctly shy in my presence, so on later visits I kept well in the background. He became friendly and at ease with my husband, eventually permitting him to take photographs of the process. For so shy a man, this represented a great concession.

Only one deposit of the argillite is known along the coast. It is at the foot of Skidegate Inlet, halfway up the slope of the Slatechuck Mountains. Two years ago Louis made the long and arduous climb up the steep trail, now overgrown and cluttered with the debris of logging operations. Carrying pick and shovel and crowbar is no light chore for an elderly man, and on the return trip he had to carry the heavy rock, as well. But he had enough to last him for several years, at his present rate of production.

The argillite is really a carbonaceous shale. Sometimes it is called Haidite. Locally it is always called slate. It is relatively soft when first quarried, contains about eight per cent water, and is then easily carved. Upon exposure to air the moisture evaporates, and the rock becomes very brittle and easily split. To keep it in workable condition, Collison wraps it in moist cloths on the way home, then coats it with glue, and finally buries it in the earth . . .

When the mood to carve comes upon him, he saws a piece off the block with an ordinary handsaw. This piece, too, he coats with glue to keep it workable. He tried woodworking tools but didn't like them. So he made his own, sometimes a flattened nail or an oft-sharpened paring knife. The argillite is quite easily carved, being about as hard as plaster though of a different consistency.

His tools dull quickly, but he can sharpen them on the whetstone in his boathouse. He knows in advance just what he is going to carve and sets about it in a leisurely way, scraping and studying, turning the stone from side to side. He's never rushed.

Collison carves all his figures on three sides and leaves the back straight and smooth. His figures are exactly symmetrical, perfectly balanced, which is no small trick for anyone, and quite remarkable for a fisherman untaught in the arts.

When he has finished carving, the material is still dull, dark grey in appearance, showing the tool marks. These he eliminates with sandpaper of various grades, until the entire surface is smooth and satiny. He digs



into the confused litter of a drawer in his small work-table, brings out a scrap of cloth, and smears it with vaseline. He scrapes a bit of graphite off a soft, large logger's pencil and rubs the carving with it until it is black and shiny.

"They used to use shoe polish or stove polish on them," he said. "But that don't last long; rubs off." This finish is long-lasting and not only adds beauty but acts as a preservative.

The vaseline and graphite mixture is rubbed thoroughly into every little crevice of the carving and worked into the porous rock. Then Collison buffs up the carving until it gleams with a high gloss, a shiny jet-black piece of true Indian carving.

When my husband asked if he would carve a six-inch pole for him, he rubbed his stubble cheek with the back of his hand. He hemmed and hawed, didn't have time, was already two years behind with orders . . . Well, when did he want it? Two weeks? Louis wasn't sure, didn't think it likely. But the pole was finished when we returned, sure evidence that Louis had taken a fancy.

A six-inch pole might take two or three days to complete, and his rate of \$1.50 an inch is certainly not unreasonable. It always makes for a better feeling all around if there's a slight overpayment! Considering the skill that goes into making the beauty of the true argillite carving, the price is certainly trifling.

This is only one reason why it is not popular with the young people. The main reason is that the Haida are a proud people, long the lords of the West Coast. They do not want to maintain differences between themselves and the dominant white man. Native crafts that widen the gap between the two races haven't much appeal for these people.



**JOHN CROSS, NEESLANT**

(c. 1850–1939)

Carver of wood, argillite, silver, and gold, John Cross or Neeslant was for many years the chief of the Eagle clan at Skidegate; he belonged to the same clan—the Eagle Fugitives—as Charlie Edensaw and Chapman the cripple. They were his fellow craftsmen of Massett to the north. His career



133. John Cross and a wooden totem (Photo by Roy Cross, in 1932)



covered a few decades in the past and present centuries, as he was born in the late 1850's and died at eighty years of age or more in the spring of 1939, a few months before my visit to his modern Skidegate house. There I inquired about him from his niece, Mrs. Walter Stevens, and from his young grand-daughters (No. 133, from photo taken by his son Roy Cross, about 1932. 87506. No. 134).

His tribal origin, according to Arthur Moody, one of his contemporaries and a junior craftsman, was from the south, but he belonged right in Skidegate. He had come from Haney, or Maud Island, where he had resided for ten years. His uncle Dan had gone with his family to Gold Harbour and stayed there for a time. Eventually, about fifty years ago, they all moved to Skidegate. Mrs. Stevens, his niece, was of a slightly different opinion as to the place of his origin. This tribe, according to her, had belonged to Tsahl. From there his family had moved to Maud Island and later to Skidegate. Her uncle Neeslant or John Cross had learned how to work from her other 'uncle' Joshua Work, a Tsimsyan half-breed of Port Simpson. Mrs Solomon Weeyæ, (or Wihæ) of Massett was his daughter. James G. Swan presumably was referring to his maternal uncles when he wrote, in 1874 (*Smithsonian Contributions to Knowledge*, XXI, p. 5): "Gitkun and his brother Geneskels—carver and tattooer... Plate 3. Koot (the Fish Eagle), painted by Geneskels, chief and principal tattooer and painter of the tribe. Painted at Port Townsend, West Territories, 1873."

He belonged to a small group of Skidegate craftsmen: Tom Price, George Smith, and Paul Jones—his contemporaries. They had all inherited the



134. John Cross's grand-daughter with Shark head-dress



traditions of their elders and were trained in their crafts. They moved ahead with the times, and their work showed the influence of the realism and creative concepts of Charlie Edensaw, their northern contemporary.

Unlike his senior, Charlie Edensaw, and his junior, Chapman, Neeslant did not devote all his time to carving, for he liked to fish and build boats during part of the year. In his first decades, he was an expert tattooer—the tattooing of crests on the arms and the body was then a common practice among his people. A set of tattoo marks he nicely reproduced in crayon for Dr. Swanton in 1903. It shows that he was as excellent a draftsman as Edensaw and John Weeyæ or Wihæ, whose work appears alongside (Jesup . . . Plates XX and XXI). Arthur Moody said to him, "This old man never forgot anything"—meaning, of the past. "He was first class, a good carver, the best from Haney. He carved everything that was wanted of him by the white people."

The tattoo drawings reproduced by John Cross for Dr. Swanton give an idea of the totems familiar to him; he presumably had utilized them in his own tattoo work at the service of others. As they were the crests of those whom he tattooed, they belonged to either phratry—the Thunderbird (Eagle) or the Raven-Killer-Whale. In the Eagle set we find the Sculpin, one of the principal totems; Wasco, the totem that was part whale and part wolf; the Eagle; the Beaver, with large incisors and broad tail with cross-hatching; the Dogfish, with dorsal and pectoral fins, large mouth and sharp teeth; the Black Whale and the Five-finned Killer-Whale; the Dragon-Fly.

The Raven set of tattoo marks reproduced by him included totems belonging to the Raven-Killer-Whale clans. The most common of all is the Killer-Whale and Thunderbird, a theme so popular that it was also appropriated at times by the Eagles. A few crests had come to the Skidegate Ravens from their Tsimshyan 'friend' Tsyebasæ of Gitrhahla; these are the Grizzly Bear, the Mountain Goat, the Moon and the Rainbow, also the fabulous Yagee Tree, the first tree on the Queen Charlotte Islands, tattooed in a realistic manner upon the arm of a Squahladas woman (Jesup . . . pp. 141, 142). The Raven and perhaps also the Frog and the Starfish belonged to some clans in both phratries.

The repertory of John Cross closely resembles that of his contemporaries: Tom Price, George Smith, Paul Jones, and even of Edensaw in his later years. It is not always easy to identify his carvings unless we resort, for a starting point, to definite information and to comparisons with what is known to be from his hand; his work varied somewhat through the years, his later work being inferior in invention and quality. Alfred Adams, who recognized a number of pieces, could not always make up his mind to whom a photographed carving was to be credited. Yet, as a trader, he had for years "handled the carvings of all these people."

The small photograph of John Cross in his seventies (*No. 133, No. 135*) shows him with a wooden totem pole about five feet high which he had carved; it was still at his home in 1939. This interesting piece of work, carved and partly painted by an old man who had lost much of his former power, reveals most of his characteristics. It illustrates the Raven and Halibut episode in the Creation myth, much in the manner of Charlie



Edensaw. The wing feathers of the Raven are typical of his own style—that is, a single large feather on the wing bone with two smaller feathers below and slanting feather lines behind.

Following Edensaw's licence in using the Bear-Mother motif, he appropriated these familiar totems, although they belonged to the opposite phratry. In the same wooden pole we see near the base the Grizzly holding the Woman, head down, in his mouth; and near the top, Bear Mother clutching one of her twin cubs in front of her and carrying the other on her head (Nos. 133, 135).

Another wooden pole of about the same size in the Collison collection at Prince Rupert contains the Raven and Halibut theme in the centre (the Raven with typical wing feathers); and at the top, Bear Mother with her cubs, one of them in human form and the other on her head as a young bear (87453. No. 136).

In one of John Cross's finer poles combining Bear Mother with two other figures, we see Bear Mother, at the base, grasping the cubs sideways between her legs. The Whale, above, bites its own tail and fins; at the top another Whale holds in its mouth Nanasingyet's wife, whose face expresses anguish, while Nanasingyet eagerly gazes forward in his search for her (Cf. *Haida Myths*, No. 100).

Another fine pole by John Cross develops the theme of the Grizzly dragging the Woman, head down, to his den; another Grizzly with a halo around his head appears above the old Grizzly chief. A third Grizzly, at the top, clasps a salmon in his paws.

An interesting wooden totem, partly painted (owned by Mr. Charles Valley, at Queen Charlotte City), is also typical of the work of John Cross and his Skidegate contemporaries, Luke Watson in particular. The Thunderbird and the Whale are on the upper half, and the Grizzly with a human figure is at the base. This may stand for the Grizzly and the Woman, or Bear Mother with one of her cubs under human form. The drawing in



135. John Cross's grand-daughter and a wooden totem





136. Wooden pole. Bear  
Mother, Raven  
and Halibut, and Bear  
(Collison coll.,  
Prince Rupert)



137. Wooden pole: Thunder-  
bird and Whale, and Grizzly  
(Charles Valley's coll.,  
Queen Charlotte City)

profile on the square base represents the Thunderbird (Photo 802657. No. 137).

In a small private collection of argillite, silver, gold, and wood carvings, photographed in 1939 in Cross's home, further data were secured. A small wooden totem pole repeats the theme of the Grizzly Bear and Woman. Above the Grizzly, the Shark is introduced; it was a favourite subject of the carver and the leading crest of his family. Here the Shark, standing on the Grizzly's head, as it were, has a woman's face and a dome-like protuberance with two gills on her forehead, and the fins rise from her tapering body. The Shark, in the mid 1880's, was Cross's characteristic theme in argillite work. His preference for the Shark is disclosed by his head-dress, which is adorned with the Shark Woman (No. 134). In a small argillite pole, the Grizzly and the Woman, plus the Frog, are repeated. A taller argillite pole contains the Eagle or the Thunderbird at the top, Wasco at the base, and between them Bear Mother with a cub (Not shown).



The wooden frame for a photograph found in Cross's home, included three of his crests treated in a flat decorative way. He often used them elsewhere: the Eagle to the left; Wasco or the Grizzly of the Sea to the right; and the Shark, upside down at the bottom.

With this initial knowledge of Neeslant's repertory, it is easier to analyse his work, from the date of its first appearance about 1885, in public and private collections where he is well represented.

A large argillite pole in the Lipsett-Ryan collection at Vancouver was ascribed by the owner to John Cross. It is one of the carver's most important pieces of work. It shows the Halibut Fisherman episode of the Raven, with his bill broken and dangling. Here the Raven clasps in his arms the Beetle or some small animal with several legs. This animal appeared several times in the repertory of the recent Haida carvers represented in the Deasy collection. The totem at the top of the pole is Wasco, with a whale upside down at his feet, another crosswise in his mouth, and a third facing forward, on his head. This is one of the most lively representations of the sea monster. The other animal at the base presumably is a repetition of Wasco; here he is in the act of devouring, head first, a Whale, whose side fins flap down on either side of the mouth (*No. 138*).

The Wasco monster was a crest of the Fugitive Eagles; it was already familiar elsewhere to John Cross and a few other totem carvers. It reappears in two poles of the Collison collection in Prince Rupert. One of these is a standard of reference, since the name of the carver is engraved at the back: "Made by John Cross of Skidegate Mission." (Engraved at the back of No. 9. Height 16½").



138. Wasco, Raven with Beetle, Whale  
(Lipsett coll., Vancouver)



Wasco in both poles occupies the centre. In the mixed shape of a whale and a wolf, the deep-sea monster holds a whale in his mouth and another within the fold of his returning tail, in one instance the hairy tail of a wolf, and in the other the double tails of a whale and a wolf, one over the other. In the first pole, the figures over and below the Wasco are other whales. Duplicated to emphasize the same crest, they fill the space decoratively. In the second, the figure above looks like the Grizzly Bear devouring a flat fish; and below, a second Grizzly with the Frog, head down on his stomach. John Cross's frogs are always fat and lumpy; they lack the style of those often repeated in Edensaw's and Chapman's repertoires.

Many other samples of John Cross's work appear elsewhere in this book, particularly in the section on argillite totems. But as our native authorities disagreed on their identity, they could not be listed in this chapter for the lack of certainty.

Another totem in the same collection may also be attributed to him ( $16\frac{1}{2}''$  x  $15\frac{1}{2}''$ . Photos 87428, 87429. Not shown).



**CHARLIE GLADSTONE,  
Whose Favourite Theme Was the Shark (1877- )**

Born at Skidegate in 1877,<sup>1</sup> Charlie Gladstone was the favourite nephew of Charlie Edensaw, whom he called Edensoo, of Massett. He had the reputation of being one of the best carvers of wood and argillite on the Islands, and a master silversmith as well. As he was still living in 1939, although in poor health, he gave the author some information on his own life and work, also on his uncle's and contemporaries, as follows:

"I stayed with my uncle Edensoo for two years, when I was about twenty-five years of age. I was just fooling around, doing nothing. Another time when I was there, he taught me how to work, but not much. But I could see him carving. He did nothing else all the time. So I tried my hand at slate argillite, and silver too. He was old then . . . For the best carvings we used yellow cedar and slate. On the Skeena river they used maple wood, for rattles and plaques in head-dresses, wherever they could find it.

"Charlie Gladstone accompanied John Cross (another Skidegate carver), and his sons Ray and Gordon Cross,<sup>2</sup> on our last trip to the slate mine."

<sup>1</sup> According to a 1911 entry in the list of residents in the Indian Agency on the Queen Charlotte Islands.

<sup>2</sup> According to informants, Ray and Gordon Cross were Charlie Gladstone's cousins.



140. Shark and Whale  
(Ash coll.,  
Cranbrook Inst.)

139. Shark totem by Charlie Gladstone





141. Shark dish by Gladstone



142. Shark dish (Sheldon Jackson Mus.). Shark dish (Lipsett-Ryan coll., Vancouver)



143. Wooden food dish (Paul Rabut coll.)





144. Engraving on plywood for a tray: Killer-Whale

Information given by Gladstone on other topics was as follows:

The old name for Skidegate was *Skagyilde*; that for Massett, *Gaao*. The name for medicine-man is *Skaaga*. For round totem pole, *rhat*; pole hollowed out at the back, *gyalren*. Carved pipe (which cannot be used for smoking), *sg'ayuhle*. Thunderbird, *Hollege*. Lightning, *sgethgaodeng*.



145. Engraving of the Shark on plywood



Gladstone's tattoo-mark on his arm is the Beaver's head, as he belongs to the Beaver clan. It should have been the whole Beaver, but he could not stand the pain caused by the operation, which required four needles.

A totem still in Gladstone's possession and his own work of a few years past is of fine quality. The crests on it are the Dogfish or Grey-Fish (*q'agawda*), whose name means "He-has-Flippers," and the Porpoise (*sq'ul*), which is not a crest. This last "was just a carving. You put on anything you fancy. It has no meaning." At the top the Eagle was perched. But it has fallen off. Gladstone's crests were, besides the Dogfish, *Qagade ora* or Dogfish-Mother.

The best pieces recovered and identified in argillite of the work by Gladstone are two small totems and a fairly large dish. The design and the execution of these are work of the first masters of the Skidegate school.

The first of the two totems contains the Shark, which is the carver's favourite theme, along with that of the Killer-Whale. Here it is shown with a human face, over which is displayed the round halo-like dome. The long fins are on the sides below. A salmon lies crosswise on the gilled dome. And three or four *skyil* cylinders complete the structure (In his own possession. Photo 102052. No. 139).

The other totem, in the Michael Ash collection at the Cranbrook Institute, Michigan, consists of the Whale at the base, which is round or



←

146. Shark engraved on plywood

147. Killer-Whale on plywood





circular. Over the Whale is the Shark with a human face, and its tail and fins are raised above to the top of the pole, then turned down and forward. The cross-hatching and polish are of the finest quality (Photo M.B. 211-5 in 1950. *No. 140*).

The large dish is decorated with the Shark crest of the maker in middle relief. It is of oblong form with pointed ends, and the shallow cavity inside is square with slightly rounded corners. The slender body and fins of the fish are repeated at both ends and decorated sides (*No. 141*).



148. Killer-Whale on back of rocking chair

149. Shark engraved on plywood  
(author's possession)







150. Charlie Gladstone

Of two other dishes in the same style, the first belongs to the Sheldon Jackson Museum, in Alaska and was photographed by Axel Rasmussen; the second, to the Lipsett-collection in Vancouver. The first is much superior in quality to the second and goes back to the best period of the maker. Here the nose of the Shark is hooked, like the Thunderbird's. And the border is decorated with opercula (87317, *No. 142*).

An oval plate, the border of which is studded with opercula, is decorated inside with the Shark, whose face and body are spread out to fill the whole space. Forming part of the Michael Ash collection at the Cranbrook Institute, Michigan, as also does the odd napkin ring of argillite set in the mouth of a white-man's dog (with drooping ears), it rests on the back of a smaller dog lying on the square

base (Photo by M.B. 213-6 in 1950. Not shown).

A wooden food dish, painted black and studded with opercula, in the Paul Rabut collection at Westport, Connecticut, is from the same hands as the napkin ring above, and it represents at both ends of the dish the white-man's dog with mouth wide open (*No. 1A,B. 18" wide x 9½" x 4¾"*. Photo by Rabut. *No. 143*).

Several panels of plywood have been decorated with engravings of the Shark and the Killer-Whale, some enhanced with colour. They were all meant to form part of tea trays with a border. But only one of these—and they were being made in the carver's old age—was seen in the maker's house. The others were unfinished. One of these engravings with the Whale design covered the back of a rocking chair. Another on plywood, engraved only and not coloured, is in the writer's possession (Photos 102060, 102059, 102056, 102049, 102055, J241. *Nos. 144-149*).

In 1947 at the age of 75 Charlie Gladstone was photographed by the author at his Skidegate home. (102054. *No. 150*).



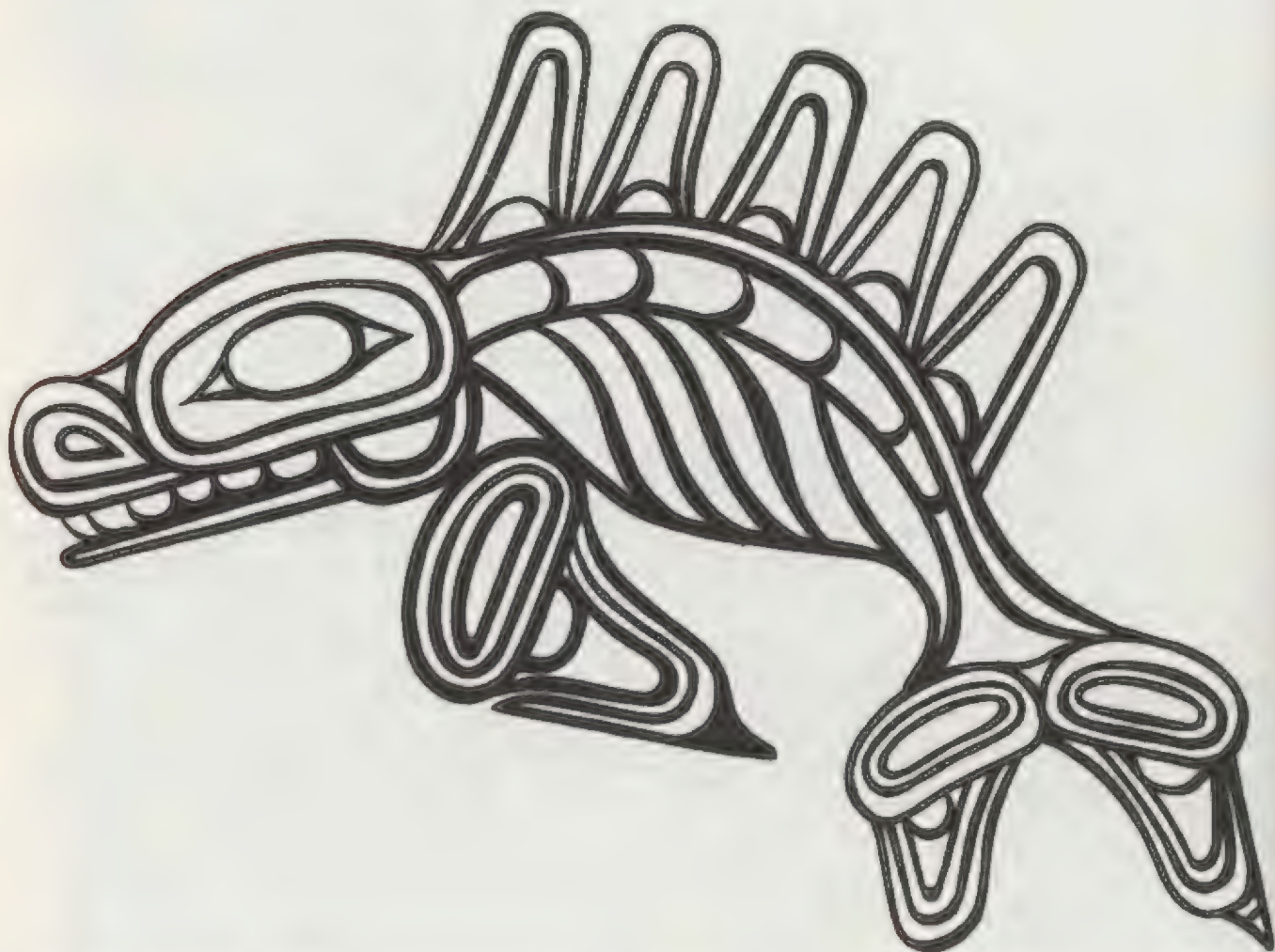
## HENRY YOUNG

Consulted by the author and used as a guide to Slatechuck creek in 1947, Henry Young gave valuable information on his carving tools, their names and origin, and on various old-fashioned objects in his possession.

"Born in Skidegate, my age was 75 in 1947, and my Haida name was Gyitadzlius. My clan [phratry] was the Raven, and my forefathers came from Naikwun, Rosespit. My crests were the Grizzly Bear (*Hootjee*), *Qayæ'i*, a large fish with several dorsal fins (different from the Whale), and were illustrated by me in a drawing (*Nos. 151, 152*). My father [he meant maternal uncle] was 'Old George Young', a carver of 'slate' totems only, and a composer of songs.<sup>1</sup> George Dixon, a Skidegate Haida, was one of my forebears [named after G. D., the Seaman whose voyage of 1785 we know]."

When a boy, Henry Young often travelled with his people up and down the coast in a large dug-out canoe. It was in the days of witch doctors, and he knew two of them. After he had grown up, he became a carver of argillite. For twenty years he made his living out of this work. It took

<sup>1</sup> On the day Young travelled with the author to Slatechuck Creek in 1947, he sang—and very well—several Haida songs.



151. Sea monster *Qayæ'i* (reproduced by A. E. Ingram from Henry Young's pencil drawing)



him a week to carve a 10-inch totem. One of his contemporaries needed only half as much time, because his 'cutting-in' was not so deep. And he (Henry) used to sign his.

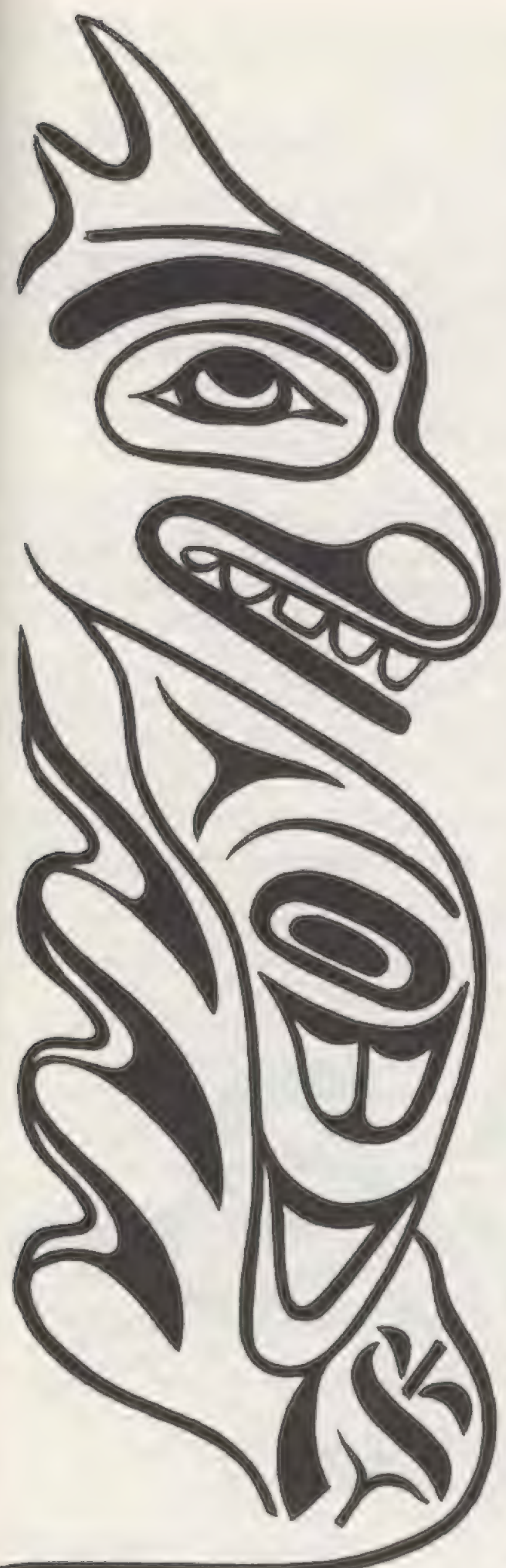
He had many pencil drawings of his own, but they have been lost. Only four were recovered and copied by him for the National Museum of Canada: The Grizzly-Bear-under-the-Sea (*Tsan-xuadzaal*) (No. 153), and the Thunderbird in flight about to capture the Grizzly-Bear-under-the-Sea (No. 154). A photo of Henry Young at Slatechuck creek was taken by the author (Photo 102044. Not shown).

Explaining the Thunderbird as represented in his drawing, Young went on to say:

"The story of the Thunderbird came to us from the mainland. This large bird lives in the high mountains and is seen by the village Indians only now and then, in the moonlight. Flying at night-time over the sea, when daylight approaches he goes back carrying a whale, and he climbs up to the mountain. All the while, lightning flashes on all sides. If unable to climb back home, he dies off, as this has happened not very long ago.

"Some people would not believe the truth of this, and thought that the old people had told lies about the Thunderbird. So five young men once climbed the mountain to find out whether he existed, and they came back declaring that they had seen something like a big rock slide, and lots of whale bones lying about. It was true that Thunderbirds had lived and died there."

Henry Young stated that he never carved the Black Bear, which



✧

152. Same sea monster  
(Henry Young, reproduced by A. E. Ingram)



is found on the Queen Charlotte Islands, only the Grizzly Bear of the mountains on the mainland, because the Grizzly (*Rhootzee*) has "a story." So it is with the Thunderbird feeding on whales.

When Henry Young sat with the author in his large house at Skidegate, he explained his equipment for carving argillite and wood. And he gave the following information on various topics familiar to him and his folk.

His tools for carving argillite came down to him through three generations. This gives one an idea of how long this kind of work has prevailed among the Haida. And he described those generations as his own; the one before, of Tom Stevens; and the earlier one, of the "grandfather" (grand uncle).

The various handicraft objects in his house were as follows:

A large spoon of buffalo horn engraved by his father, and called *tchisku k'amagai*, bought from the Hudson's Bay Company. In order to carve this spoon, it first had to be softened by steaming. Isaac Hands, Young's sister's husband, who is still living, is a good carpenter and used to carve horn spoons. His pattern was the Dogfish or the big Shark.

Penholders of bone of the whale (*koodjee*) made like a totem pole (*rhat*). Whale bone: *kunskudjee*. Whale: *kun*. The handle of one penholder is decorated with the Wasco; another, with the Halibut (*rhagoo*), which has a story. Another shows the mythical ancestress *Silarhkuns*.

A large horn spoon with attached dark handle was called *slaaguwl*. The figures carved on the handle are the Whale-Raven, *squaana*; the Sea-Lion, *qrhaai*; and Rhuya.



153. Grizzly-Bear-under-the-Sea (reproduced by Ingram from Young's drawing)



The Raven, Henry Young added, is known under several names: (1) *Khled-zenengkingan*, (2) *Gwaaskyeyitkaan*, (3) *Gwaikyilte* or Island-Raven, (4) *Kyilte*, "when he cracks off," caws, and (5) *Nengkilsslas-hlngaai*, that is, "when he was small and had still to become the wonderful man of these islands."

A silver collar (19" around) for a woman with a high-necked dress, made by John Cross for Mrs. Young. The engraving on it is of the *Q'ayæi*, the sea monster with a story. To make this collar, silver dollars, about four of them, were furnished and melted down in charcoal into a chunk of metal. This was hammered down and worked upon. An amount of \$15 was paid for the work.

Two gold bracelets about half an inch wide, with clasps, also made by John Cross when he was young, the first belonging to Mrs. James Wilson. The name for bracelet is *rhooye*. One is decorated with the Raven, the other with the Grizzly. The second bracelet belonged to Henry Young's mother, Fanny Blackstone (her maiden name).

A gold brooch, an Eagle pin also of gold, a pair of gold ear-rings (*gyoogya*), all three by John Cross.

Three brooches of gold with fur-seal teeth (*q'uwandzin*), decorated with a scroll: "When the engraver has nothing to use [a crest], he carves flowers"; the second brooch is decorated with the Thunderbird; the third, again with flowers (2" and 2½" in width).

A gold bracelet with clasp belonging to Henry Young's daughter Ellena, carved for her grandmother by John Cross about 50 years ago. The work cost \$20 at the time of its making. It shows the Raven.

A smaller gold bracelet, also by John Cross, again showing the Raven.

Other information given by Henry Young is as follows:

Canoes called *kloo* were eight fathoms long; they were used to cross over to the mainland. Another name for them was *mawlgaw*, the largest 8 or 10 fathoms long.

A tray of yellow cedar (13" x 18½") was recently made by Billy Russ, decorated with a painted engraving of the Whale (*sgaana*).

A carved board (11½" x 20") showing the Shark or Dogfish was by the same carver.

A bow of yew, about 70 years old, was made by Young's father (47" long). The string used to be of seal gut, cleaned, stretched, dried, and twisted. It never broke. Inside the bow, the engraving is of the Whale.

A large woven basket of split spruce roots was made by Henry Young's wife.

A black bent hook of hemlock wood was called *sqihl-t'aarhwel* (hook of wood).

A deed in Henry Young's possession, dated "No. 1865," is a "Conveyance from the Directors of the Queen Charlotte Coal Mining Company to Captain Skidegate" (*skeedegyets*). This was for the acquisition of his property, safeguarding his hunting rights.

Another document from Thomas Stevens (Henry Young's uncle) bequeaths his title as Chief of the *Q'aste* River to Henry Young.





154. Thunderbird and Sea Bear (reproduced by Ingram from Young's drawing)



### JIM MACKAY — DOWEKYE-KYIHLAS

In 1939, Mackay was the captain of a salmon-fishing schooner plying for a company between Prince Rupert and North or Langara Island. In July of that year the author crossed over with him to the Queen Charlotte Islands. One night as we stood and conversed together on deck under a bright northern sky, he expressed his belief that to-day the only ambition for an Indian must be to live like a white man. His own position and responsibilities seemed to justify his view. A Skidegate Haida gifted like him, with a fine stature and strong features, speaking his native language as well as English, past middle age and familiar with the peculiarities and

stormy waters of his coast and islands, he was assured of the confidence of his patrons and shared in the ways of life of a full Canadian (Photo 87927. No. 155).

Not a few proud Haida of his generation have wanted, like him, to turn their backs upon what is considered a lurid past. Abuse, depravity, and disease in the past six or seven generations have reduced the population on the Queen Charlotte Islands from about 30,000 pure bred and healthy islanders to less than 800 half-breeds of mixed heredity and frailties, though they are now holding their own with some stability.

Yet, during his whole lifetime, Jim Mackay was able to wield the gouge and the chisel to good effect and was known as one of the best argillite carvers. He was the brother, under a different family name, of the leading carvers, Louis Collison and Amos Watson. As the demand for totems and curios is now heavier and more remunerative than ever before, he should have remained interested. When asked why he had dropped his tools and given up his craft, he replied, "You have urged us to shed our grandfather's Indian blanket. And now you are telling me to put it back. Too late, my friend."



155. Jim Mackay in 1939





156. Eagle, Whale, and Eagle, by Jim Mackay



157. Grizzly, Eagle, Whale, Grizzly

He was one of the last surviving members of his Eagle family. His Haida name was Dowekye-Kyihlas, "Boss of anything," a Raven name, originally from the village of T'yalen-Keyoway out of Massett.

How unwise he was in spite of appearances! The fishing season lasts only part of the year, and the workers' income is wholly dependent upon the salmon run, good some years and very poor others—almost nil about the islands that very year of 1939. The fishermen in midsummer were subsisting on short rations. Leisure and idleness the rest of the time were apt to ruin morale. Wood and argillite carving, in spite of harking back to the past, would help to bridge an ever-recurring gap and provide steady returns during the lean seasons. Growing aware of this and realizing the lack of any school or government assistance, a few of the younger men at Skidegate, it seems, are now turning to the tool boxes of their deceased uncles and showing real aptitude and talent. Would that somebody endowed with power and inspiration would go round and put a shoulder to the wheel for a revival!



But Jim Mackay could no longer change his mind about the "Indian blanket." For he died in an accident a few years ago "under the influence," though he was not usually intemperate.

His work, mostly from his earlier career, is sufficiently well represented in museum and private collections to entitle him to a high rank among the last masters of his craft.

At least nine totems have been identified as his work, as follows:<sup>1</sup>



159. Argillite dishes, ash trays,  
by Jim Mackay

158. Totems, by Jim Mackay

<sup>1</sup> The photographic numbers and the collectors will be indicated in a single group at the end of the chapter.



In one of them, about 15 inches high, the Eagle sits at the top holding the tail of the Whale in his talons. The Whale, in the middle, carries a small human figure in his mouth—this may be meant for Nanasimgyet, the native Orpheus travelling to the nether world. And the Eagle (with a bill mortised in) is at the base. This is a fine piece of work, cut in deeply (*No. 156*).

The Grizzly Bear is at the top of another, and on his stomach is the three-toed Frog facing upward. The Eagle with the Whale is next; the Whale's head is human-like. The Grizzly (or Beaver?) is at the base, with a human face between his knees. The bill of the Eagle and the dorsal fin of the Whale, having been added to the carving, project outside of the main shaft (*No. 157*).

At the top of a third beautiful totem, a proud Eagle perches on a pile of five cylinders on the head of the Grizzly Bear. This Bear embraces the large lumpy Frog, head down. A fine Eagle with a long bill sits at the base (Not shown).

In two totems, not shown, Strong-Man (Gu'nas) tears apart the Whale, whose head is down; his mother-in-law, the witch, is placed upside down and tries to grasp the head of the Whale; the Grizzly, at the base, eats a fish. In one of these the Thunderbird at the top is with the Whale, head down; the Grizzly sits at the base.

Two more totems of fine quality are of the same average size. In the first of these the Thunderbird is with his quarry, the Whale, whose dorsal fin projects outside the line of the shaft, as also does the bill of the Eagle below. In the second, Bear Mother at the top is with her two cubs (strangely enough the higher cub is shown with a flipper); the Whale carries Nanasimgyet on his tail, turned upward; the Wasco, with his tail turned upward, at the base, is shown with his two fish crosswise, turned in opposite directions. Both these totems are among Mackay's best (*No. 158*).

Still another totem, in the Gordon H. Joliffe collection at Queen Charlotte City, is of Bear Mother with her twin cubs and the Frog, at the base. Sqagwaai appears next with the Whale. Near the top, the Grizzly holds his human bride, head down, in his mouth; and the twin cubs—one under human form—are held sideways in their mother's arms (15" high. Photos 102070, 102071, 102072. Cf. *Haida Myths*. No. 100). Henry Young's remark about Jim Mackay was that "he always carved Bear Mother."

A number of deep dishes, decorated mostly with animal and human faces, were reduced by Mackay in size so as to be suitable for ash trays—a practical development based on tradition. In a first group here, six views are given, two with the seal or sea-lion; three, the human face—men, and woman with labret; another is a round dish, the sides of which have godroons with a rope border. All these are executed with mastery and fine finish (*No. 159*).

In a second group, a deep dish is decorated with the Whale and the Bear; the faces of both are human-like. A fine oval plate, with a ribbon-like border containing four inlays of opercula, is decorated inside with the





160. Candle-holders, ash trays, and dishes, by Jim Mackay

161. Argillite candle-holders, by Jim Mackay



Grizzly with protruding tongue. The next is an ash tray in the modern style; its wide border carries engravings, and two Eagles are carried in high relief on the short post in the middle. At the top of the group of five different pieces are two candle-holders boldly decorated with the Wasco and his two fish; abalone and bone inlays complete the decoration (*No. 160*).

A third group consists of six candle-holders on which appear (from the top down) Thunderbird and his quarry, the Whale, in his talons; Raven with a Salmon across his bill; two Thunderbirds back to back, each with the Whale in his talons; Raven holding a Salmon, and at his back Shark-Woman with gills, a labret in the lower lip, and with a peculiar one-sided tail; Thunderbird with a Whale in his talons; and another Shark-Woman (*No. 161*).

A fourth group in the Collison collection at Prince Rupert holds two different oval plates on massive pedestals. The cavities of both are smoothly engraved, and the feet are decorated with two Grizzlies each, back to back (Photos 87310, 87311. Only one shown. *No. 162*).

The work of Jim Mackay with photographic numbers is preserved in the following collections:

At the University of Pennsylvania: 41-24-442;

At the Washington State Museum: Photo by M.B. 102024;

In Major A.P. Van Stolk's collection in Montreal (Seen at the Dominion Gallery): Photos by M.B. 97565-8; a tot em 15" high;

In the Lipsett collection, Vancouver: Photos 87298, 87299;

In the Gordon H. Joliffe private collection at Queen Charlotte City: Photos by M.B. 10271-6, 102092, 102093, 102095.



162. Plate on pedestal, with Grizzly (Collison coll., Prince Rupert)



## LUKE WATSON, AND LATER-DAY CARVERS

### LUKE WATSON

Luke Watson was a member of the Raven phratry, whose crest was the Thunderbird; it was tattooed on his body. He was the nephew by adoption of the noted carver George Smith, formerly of Gold Harbour, who later moved to Skidegate, like the other southern Haida. When he was young he carved totems with his uncle, but it was mostly with Joshua Work (Yæhlnao) on the mainland among the coast Tsimshyan that he had his training as an apprentice; for Joshua Work, though born in Skidegate, lived most of his life at Port Simpson, and "he was a great carver of wood."

Luke Watson, a foundling born of white parents, was adopted by Joshua Work and his wife, a Tlingit woman. He knew how to speak Tsimshyan in his childhood, although his language was Haida. He spoke broken English as well. In spite of his fair complexion, thick white hair, and clear deep voice, he considered himself a native islander, yet he looked like a

white man. Like one who belongs to a superior race he was apt to be self-assertive. A fine carver in the old style, he had worked in association not only with his "uncle" George Smith, but also with his friend Tom Moody of Tanu.

When the author visited him in 1939 and 1947, he showed him a huge new dug-out canoe under a long shelter on the beach at Skidegate. This he had carved for a white man at Vancouver, who had changed his mind about it at the last moment and would not accept delivery. This seems to have been the last canoe of its type ever made. And it may never have floated on the salt sea.

Watson still kept a few of his own wood carvings in his bay-windowed house, which was much too large for an old man living alone; it was sloppily kept, as that of any native. Like his uncle Joshua Work, he carved nothing but wood. At that time, he was engraving one of his crests on an oblong board of yellow cedar (Photo 87514. No. 163).



163. Luke Watson wood carving, in 1947





164. Wooden box carved by Luke Watson, but unfinished



165. Wooden totem carved by Watson

On the ground beside him, in the same photograph, lies a fairly large yellow cedar box made by him at the age of 20, when he was a pupil of Joshua Work. Formerly it was used for storing food, especially black cod grease which he considered better than *oolachen* or candlefish oil. On this food box are engraved his crests, which are highly stylized, almost beyond recognition. He explained them as being the Dragon-Fly (*mamer-tsik'ay*), whose Massett name is *laganaa-donai*. The head is at one end of the box and the tail is at the other; the upper and lower wings are on the sides (20" x 15½" x 12". Photo 102654. No. 164).

One remarkable totem, although unfinished, is carved in hard wood. It illustrates part of the myth of Qagwaai or Stone-Ribs, the Strong Man of the south, a Hercules (explained in *Haida Myths*. Pp. 314-326). The figure at the base shows the Raven emerging from the mouth of the bear-like sea monster. The Crab with his many legs appears above, and at the top the same sea monster with the Raven is repeated (18" high x 2½". Photo in 1947, 102659. No. 165).

One of the most significant illustrations of the Nanasimgyet myth is in a six-foot wooden totem pole carved about 1940 by George Smith and Luke Watson, who both lived in Skidegate (Cf. *Haida Myths*, No. 267. Pp. 299, 304. Photos 87384-6).

Another beautifully carved and painted wooden totem, over six feet tall (now in Texas), is in much the same style and is attributed to Luke





166. Nanasingyet and Strong-Man myths illustrated



167. Nanasingyet and Strong-Man myths illustrated in wooden totem  
(Charles Valley coll.)



Watson alone. The carved figures once again illustrate the Nanasingyet or Orpheus myth in the upper half, and the Qagwaai or Strong Man of the south in the lower part. At the very top, on the head of the protecting Eagle, is the white Sea-Otter. Under the beak of the Eagle, between his wings and on the Whale sits the lost wife. Beneath these, Nanasingyet, holding on with his hands to the eyebrows of the other Whale, squats on all fours. The small figure under the Whale may be a second Sea-Otter. In the lower half of the pole the Crab of the Skidegate Narrows appears, and next to the base the Raven comes out of the Sea-Bear (Photo supplied by the owner in the United States. *No. 166*).

Another wooden totem pole, partly painted, was recently made by Luke Watson for Charles Valley of Queen Charlotte City; it illustrates the same myths. The Raven at the base is forcing himself out of the Sea-Bear's mouth. Above, Nanasingyet holds on with both hands to the Whale's dorsal fin. And the Grizzly, his inland totem, squats on his head (Photo by Richard Harrington, communicated by the owner. *No. 167*).

Luke Watson once spoke of "a strange slate carving found on the beach at Skidegate by Simon Wesley. Birds were engraved on it, and also Chinese-like writing. It has since been lost."

A large, fine, stone axe, with lateral ridges, still preserved by Watson, was also picked up in the same neighbourhood.

#### LATER-DAY CARVERS

Other and younger carvers, endowed with tradition and talent, also belong to our time, for the art of carving argillite and wood is not exclusively of the past; it shows definite signs of revival now at Skidegate.

A number of unidentified totems and other pieces in the large Deasy collection made in the 1900-1920's, and in other collections, may be listed as additional materials from such later-day craftsmen as the following:

Gauhlens, of the Grizzly-Bear group, Charlie Edensaw's 'grand-father'; Gauhlens was married to Edensaw's mother, and died about 1920.

Joliffe, who was Arthur Moody's uncle, was, like him, originally from Tanu or Old Kloo. He was a headman at Queen Charlotte City, which is part of Skidegate. He carved Indian doctors in the same style as William Dixon.

Edward Collison, whose Haida name was Qanrhuat, was an Eagle and a nephew of Chief Skidegate. In 1939, he was about 60 or 70 years old and was considered a "fairly good carver."

Yæhlhao or Joshua Work of Skidegate and Port Simpson on the mainland, was a Raven of the same tribe and family as the woodcarver Luke Watson. He died at about 70 years of age in the early 1930's. According to Alfred Adams, he was one of the best carvers of his time, "who preferred wood to other materials."

Amos Ross, an outstanding chief of Skidegate, carved only occasionally and rather crudely. The author has seen his tiny statuette of a crouching medicine-man with a bone peg in his nose, in the private collection of



the Rev. Mr. Gillett at Prince Rupert. This Indian doctor has long hair streaming from a knot on his head down to below his waist ( $2\frac{2}{3}$ ' high).

Tim Pearson, older than Charlie Gladstone of Skidegate, from whom Mr. Walter C. Waters of Wrangell, Alaska, secured totem poles before 1939; some of them are fair and include the Raven and the Beaver.

And finally Mollie Jones, still living near Skidegate in 1939; she was said to carve "very good" ash trays in argillite.



## MASSETT MASTERS

The earliest carved posts on record for the Haida belonged to Kyusta on Langara Island to the northwest. One of them, a house portal, is shown in a crude drawing by John Bartlett, a sea trader from Boston, Massachusetts (1790-1793).<sup>1</sup> Yet, there is no evidence that the tradition of argillite and silver work in the north antedates 1860; it developed at Skidegate first. In both centres, it has steadily declined since 1920, and the names and samples of the production of no more than fifteen craftsmen at Massett have been secured from a few survivors who were consulted in 1939 and 1947. Among the earliest and the best were Charlie Edensaw, Walter Kingego and his brother Gwaytihi, and Isaac Chapman. They and the others on record owe their art in this field to their forerunners at Skidegate. They will be studied here.

### SAM QAOSTE

(1800 ? -1892)

Qaoste—a Tlingit name—was probably the earliest argillite carver of Massett; he died in 1892. "He was a good ninety years old" (Alfred Adams). Born soon after 1800, he was of the first generation of craftsmen who became interested in the possibilities for carving the so-called "black slate" of Slatechuck Creek near Skidegate. He was one of the leaders of the Kuna-lanos clan or (Town-People-of-the-Point) of the Ravens at Naikun village in the north. The chief of this clan was Qogits, "Common Sea-Otter," whose crests were the Grizzly Bear, Tsamaos (the Snag), the Killer-Whale, and the Sea-Lion.

Qaoste headed a little group of the most noted northern Haida carvers, including the brothers Kingego and Gwaytihi who belonged to it in their own maternal line; the Moodys of Skidegate also were related to him. Charlie Edensaw, an Eagle, was linked with Qaoste on his father's side and had the privilege of using in his carvings the Grizzly Bear, the crest of his father's people.

Alfred Adams, our Massett informant in 1939, was related to Qaoste on his father's side. He stated that Qaoste had frequently made connections with Skidegate. His son Peter Brown, who died not long ago, was chief of Skidegate. Both father and son made "large canoes, wonder canoes." Sam Qaoste "was a famous canoe maker and a carver of masks and large totem poles." Peter Brown, his son, also carved large poles, and some of those now standing in the park at Prince Rupert "may be from him." He was a fast runner, and, as Adams put it, "he told me about the good points of the Haida and how a man like myself should behave."

None of Sam Qaoste's work has been definitely identified.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Totem Poles*, Vol. II, pp. 803, 804.





168. Argillite comport, with Bears (Nat. Mus. Can.)



CHARLIE EDENSAW  
(1839-1924)

**His Reputation at Home and Abroad**

Charlie Edensaw or Eedensuh, actually named Tahayren (Noise-in-the-house) by his own people, became the best known of the North Pacific Coast carvers. He was born in 1839, a few years after the Hudson's Bay Company had established its earliest post on the sea-coast at Fort Simpson (later Port Simpson) in 1833, and at other posts at Millbank, Nisqually on Puget Sound, and at Victoria on Vancouver Island in 1843. He died in 1924 at the advanced age of 85. His personal experience covered nearly a century of frontier life and warfare, of fur and slave trading, and of human vicissitudes that now belong to the past.

Edensaw was the only professional carver among his people. Specializing in argillite and silver, he devoted most of his time to his work. For this reason, his carvings were more abundant and of better quality than those of his contemporaries, who pursued other activities for a livelihood: fishing, hunting, house and canoe building. His high rank as a chief and his personal character gave him a reputation at home and abroad that was unsurpassed on the sea-coast from Alaska to California. The name of Charlie Edensaw was familiar for many years among traders, seamen, and scholars.

A few scientists interested in his work—Dawson, Boas, C. F. Newcombe, Lieut. Emmons, Swanton—collected his carvings for museums and used them as illustrations so extensively that our first impressions of Northwest Coast art were decidedly influenced. For he was an individualist. His themes and style were largely his own. Creative and modern, his art should not be mistaken for merely traditional art. It stands under its own colours as a recent development in Haida craftsmanship, rather apart from that of native forerunners on the islands or the nearby mainland.

The glamour of Edensaw's reputation has given rise to fiction. We should not accept as truth the well-known story of his rivalry with Chapman, a younger carver who was represented as his native slave. Nor should it be said, as has been done, that the most highly praised of his totems



169. Argillite comport with Eagle



were "genealogical trees of the Edensaw family..." For Charlie Edensaw was far from restricting his attention to "his own family history" or "genealogical tree." His plastic and pictorial repertory, apart from heraldry, covers several phases of the life of the ancient Haida. In his argillite boxes, dishes and trays, pipes, statuettes, miniature canoes, high relief groups, and totem poles from a few inches to two feet high, many people, animals, and patterns are shown and are illustrative of daily activities no less than of ancient folk tales such as those of the Raven and Bear Mother.

The date of an Edensaw carving in a museum or a private collection cannot as a rule be definitely stated. Its identity itself might remain hypothetical were we not to rely upon personal recollections, comparisons, and the opinion of his surviving contemporaries, whether white men or Indians, who knew his work well and recognized it from photographs. Among these contemporaries were Alfred Adams, an elderly Massett Indian and former trader of Haida carvings, and the late Rev. W. E. Collison, for many years a missionary on the Queen Charlotte Islands and a son of Bishop Collison, first missionary on the Islands, from the early 1880's. On the other hand, the possessors of argillite who have heard of Edensaw's achievements are likely to attribute to him carvings that may not be his work.

### His Childhood and Career

Like every other Haida, Charlie Edensaw belonged by birth to his mother's clan, whose emblems he shared or inherited. She was a member



170. Charlie Edensaw and his work (Photo *ca.* 1890)



of the Stistas clan of the Eagle phratry at Skidegate. But he was also related in a different way to his father's clan; his father belonged to the opposite phratry, the Kwaduwawas clan of the Raven phratry, also of Skidegate. From his mother's people he inherited the Eagle and Beaver crests; these he used in many of his carvings. But he had a right also to other maternal emblems of lesser importance, like Wasco or Sea-Wolf, the Frog (not usually considered a crest), and Dzelarhons, the fabulous ancestress of the Eagles, all occasionally found in his work.

When young, Edensaw stayed at Skidegate with his folk and often went with them to Kyusta on the northwestern tip of Graham Island. In the early days of discovery and navigation (1790 and thereafter), Kyusta was a village of importance. The fur traders of the Pacific stopped there for barter, as it was near the breeding grounds of the sea-otter, whose valuable pelt they coveted more than any other. Edensaw's parents were in close touch with the white sailors; and one of them, in his quality of head chief, is said to have exchanged his name for that of a noted sea-captain. In the manuscript logbook of the Ship *Hamilton* from Boston<sup>1</sup> (at the Queen Charlotte Islands in 1809), the name of 'Odensu' is mentioned in the first half of the nineteenth century.

When the Haida no longer gathered at Kyusta for the hunt because of the disappearance of the sea-otter, they remained on their former fishing preserves or moved into new villages. Albert Edward Edensaw, uncle of Charlie Edensaw and the head chief at that time, moved his home from west to east, across the top of the island to Tow Hill near Rosespit, at the northeasternmost point. Later, about 1880, when the Rev. Mr. Collison (later a bishop) established a mission at Massett, he and his family joined other bands known at Hadaiwas or Hanging-Light, at the central point in the north, which became the mission and the Hudson's Bay Company trading post of Massett.

The Edensaw's uncle, his nephew, and their families finally settled at Hanging-Light or Massett, near the mouth of the largest inlet in the north. Having moved by stages from the south to the north, they brought privileges, heraldic emblems, and traditions that had been their own at the older island centre of Skidegate. The family possessed great manual skill in workable metals, wood, or argillite. Charlie Edensaw's uncle, Albert Edensaw, had been a leading iron- and copper-smith; he was among the best carvers of tall totem poles on the islands. His nephew Charlie Edensaw must have come under his influence during his early training and undoubtedly learned a great deal from his father's people: "He got his start there when he was young, for the slate carvers at the time all lived in Skidegate." A craftsman's calling was not the lot of common folk (according to Alfred Adams), but of the chosen few in the highest lineage, and it behoved the holder of such a privilege to train the fittest and most gifted among his nephews as his successors. Charlie Edensaw, after his folk had moved north, often visited his Skidegate relatives, particularly when he was on his way to Slatechuck Creek to select his own argillite.

The above account of the origins and early life of Charlie Edensaw is largely based upon information given by Alfred Adams in 1939. Adams

<sup>1</sup> At the Peabody Museum, Salem, Massachusetts.





171. Wooden totems by Charlie Edensaw (For *Haida* by Swanton)



was a leading member of the Massett group. But later, in 1947, further particulars were received from Charles Thompson, also of Massett. These are incorporated here in a text prepared by Mrs. Josephine Hambleton Dunn, as follows:

His childhood was sad because he grew ill, and all his relatives died except his mother. She used to get oolachen grease (candlefish) in the spring, and to gather seaweed, which she dried. These foods and her care restored her son to health. She worked hard, for they were very poor.

When he grew up, she advised him to leave Skidegate and go to Massett to marry among her people. He agreed to follow her advice. She gave him an old-fashioned pistol. One day he began to play with the weapon while lying abed. He pointed the muzzle to his face and pulled the trigger. Nothing happened. The third time he pulled the trigger, the pistol fired and the bullet narrowly missed his face. To celebrate this narrow escape, Charlie Edensaw gave a potlatch. During the course of the feast, he held the gun to his face and re-enacted the scene. But this time it was not loaded.

Shortly afterwards he left Skidegate and made his way to Massett. He took the pistol with him, and when he reached Massett he held another potlatch. He said to his guests, as he put the muzzle of the gun in his mouth: "Had not the gun missed the mark, I should not be among you, to-day."

Then he broached the real reason for the feast, explaining: "Masset is our ancestral home. All my people here have died away. That is why I have come back to Massett to represent them. I wish to be one of your people, to marry and live here. I have settled everything in readiness for my future wife, and shall be as attached to my brothers-in-law as though they were my own brothers. My people were hunters, but I am a silversmith (*ladzzola*). Silvercraft is my trade."

Charlie Edensaw married in Massett, raised a family, and maintained it by carving silver bracelets, ear-rings, and rings. Sometimes he carved black slate (*kwawhlahl*) and miniature totem poles in yew wood (*hlæd*). He made a great deal of money, bought a sailing boat, and built two houses. These houses used to stand here in Massett. But later they were torn down.

His family comprised several daughters who married, and whose married names were Emily White, Agnes Yæhtetsi, Florence Davis, and Norah Pell. He had only one son, Gynawen, a fisherman, who also married, and of whom he was very fond.

Gynawen used to fish above the mouth of the Nass River. It so happened that once he agreed to meet his father and mother and two sisters at Port Simpson. On the agreed day, two of his sisters went down to the wharf at Port Simpson. Charlie Edensaw at the time stayed there, to sell his carvings and jewelry.

When the C.P.R. ship "Princess Louise," coming from the Queen Charlotte Islands, sailed into Port Simpson, the sisters went to meet their brother. But they saw a casket being lowered from the ship, and their brother was nowhere to be seen. Meanwhile Charlie Edensaw was strolling down to the wharf. On his way he met Staasti, a Haida, who advised him to turn back. The old sculptor imagined he was arrested, for those were lawless days when violent brawls involved innocent and guilty alike. His friend then told him that his son Robert was dead. Rapidly the news spread, and by the time the old man returned home, many people had gathered to offer their sympathy. Charlie Edensaw's grief distracted him. After he was left alone, he said to himself: "What shall I do? When I became a man, I never imagined I should suffer so much." He packed his tool box.

"It would not do to part with my tools. I am still a man. I cannot part with my tools. They would have been useful to my son."

The father took his son's body home to Massett, and after the burial he kept repeating to his friends that Gynawen had been his only son, had fallen ill at the Nass, and had died.

Charlie Edensaw carved until his death.





172. Totems by Charlie Edensaw (for *Haida* by Swanton)



### The Raven<sup>1</sup>

How the world was created by the supernatural Raven has been told through the ages by the native tribes of Siberia and northwestern America. Various versions of this narrative have been given in *Haida Myths*.<sup>2</sup> The first to use the Creation story was Charlie Edensaw. For him it opened a new field for his gift as a native illustrator.

Once the Raven, Beaver, Salmon, and the Halibut themes were made popular by Edensaw, they were adapted to different settings or transformed by some of his imitators in later years down to the present. We find them represented in the work of George Smith, Tom Price, John Cross, Wesley, all four in Skidegate; of Chapman, the so-called slave of Edensaw; and of a survivor of the past generation, old 'Captain' Andrew Brown of Massett.

The fish in the Raven's possession, as seen in the carvings of Edensaw and his followers, are not always shapely salmon, but sometimes halibut with both eyes on the same side of the head; for the Raven more than once is said to have captured fish for his own use or the benefit of the people.

An unusual piece of work by Charlie Edensaw, the property of Sir Alfred Bossom, was recently found in a case at the Imperial Institute in London, England. Unfortunately it could not be photographed. In an oval dish about the same size as the Halibut Fisherman,<sup>3</sup> the Thunderbird and the Beaver stand erect, one following the other in Indian file. The plastic quality of the carvings and engravings in both compositions remains unsurpassed in Haida art.

The episode of the Beaver House carried away by the Raven is another often-repeated theme of Edensaw and his followers.<sup>4</sup> In its usual form, the House in the bill of the bird thief is shown as a tiny square, decorated on its upper side with a design, which in one instance seems to be the Salmon. So the House seems to be the one where the supernatural trickster was sheltered by Tsing, his kindly host. The Beaver House in the Raven's bill was carved on small poles no less than five times, once at least by an imitator of a later date. The House is shown in the form of a flat square projecting sideways, partly outside the bill; the wings of the bird are at rest, and the tail is upturned to fill the vacant space. One of the most typical forms occurs in a specimen of the Collison collection at Prince Rupert (Cf. *Haida Myths*, Nos. 132-138, inclusive).

The Beaver House is found twice in the Deasy Collection. In a short pole, the proud Raven sits at the top of the House. The Beaver stands erect below and gnaws a short stick. In this pole and another, both the very best from the hands of Edensaw, a massive human face is added under the flat square, which represents the House; the face presumably was meant for the host inside, whose pathetic expression in his trials is plain for all to see.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. "How the Raven stole the sun," by Marius Barbeau, in the Trans. Royal Society of Canada, 1944 (pp. 59-69, with illustrations). Also *Haida Myths* (loc. cit., pp. 154-191) and *Totem Poles* (loc. cit., Vol. I, pp. 324-361).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Haida Myths*, Nos. 118, 122, 124, 125, 132, 133, 146A,B, 286, 287.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Ibid.* No. 118.

<sup>4</sup> Recorded by Dr. John R. Swanton in "Haida Texts." Bur. Am. Ethnology, Bull. 29, pp. 114-115.





173. Totems by Edensaw (*Haida*, Swanton)



These Beaver House symbols on totem poles usually are grouped with the Sitting Beaver, whose checkered tail is upturned and who is in the process of gnawing a stick. This figure almost invariably is placed at the bottom of the pole.

### Bear Mother

Bear Mother is more at home among the Tsimshyan than among the Haida and the Tlingit, where it is a phratric crest.<sup>1</sup> Yet it belongs to the Haida as well, particularly to those of Massett and Kaigani in the north, although the Grizzly does not exist on the Queen Charlotte Islands. The Grizzly Bear appears on Haida totem poles and has been a favourite theme for Haida carvers of wood and argillite. As an emblem it belonged exclusively

<sup>1</sup> *Totem Poles of the Gitksan*. Bull. 61, Nat. Mus. Canada, 1929. Pp. 108-132. *Totem Poles*, loc. cit. Vol. I, pp. 180-256. *Haida Myths*, loc. cit., pp. 108-147. "Bear Mother," in *J. Am. Folklore*, Jan.-March, 1946. Pp. 1-12, with illustrations. All four by the author of this book.



174. Totem by Edensaw (*Haida*, Swanton)



to the moiety of the clan of which the Edensaws were leading members. Charlie Edensaw, therefore, was the first to enjoy the privilege of illustrating its theme and used it especially in his miniature carvings.

The incidents in Bear Mother selected by the Haida illustrators differ from those in favour for totemic representation among the Tsimshian. Most Haida illustrations bring out the early incidents in the story: the capture of the disrespectful young berry-picker<sup>1</sup> by two spirit Grizzlies; the marriage of Woman and Bear and their supernatural relationship; and the birth and nursing of cubs by their human-like mother. All these argillite carvings, in so far as we know, come from the hands of a few leading carvers of the Haida: Skaoskeay of Skidegate (c. 1880), Charlie Edensaw (1839-1924), and Chapman, the cripple. But a few pieces are difficult to identify as either by Edensaw or his contemporaries.

In Edensaw's illustration of the berry-picker myth, shown on page 87 of *Haida Myths*, the flat background is decorated with conventional designs of eyes, and wing- and tail-feathers. A band of incised godroons, typical of Edensaw's manner, frames the parallelogram, and the berry-picker's eyes have been traced freehand; whereas in previous carvings, Nos. 55 and 56 of *Haida Myths*, the eyes were made round with the help of a compass, as was his custom.

In the artist's treatment of this episode it is obvious that he was playing up his subject with fantasy and inspiration. In so doing, he disclosed the Asiatic sources of Haida culture. His work here reaches the peak of Haida art in any form. And we must remember that it belongs to our time, from about 1880 onward.

As an illustrator, Edensaw showed unsurpassed power in other episodes in the Bear-Mother narrative (Cf. *Haida Myths*, No. 76). In this piece the unusual form of the block is intermediate between that of a stubby totem pole and a panel-like ensemble resting on a square bevelled base, which is glued on (collection of the National Museum of Canada).

### Decorated Bowls and Plates

The decoration on bowls, plates, and dishes in foreign style was not all inspired by the Raven myth. Edensaw's comports tell of outside influences, which the Haida craftsmen constantly underwent from the beginning. A small set of English plate, presumably silver, in the possession of the Edensaw family, furnished models to him for bowls carved out of argillite<sup>2</sup>.

The first of four Edensaw comports, with a round bowl on a stem, is European in style but typically Haida in its decoration. Two emblematic Bears in the round serve as handles, and the engravings under the bowl include eyes, feathers, nostrils, claws, checkered fillings, and godroon borders. The stem, ornamented with a ring and upright fluting, rests on a disk-like foot (Diam.  $8\frac{7}{8}$ ", height  $6\frac{1}{2}$ ". Photo 88936. No. 168).

In these comports more than anywhere else, Edensaw's style clearly shows that he was a silversmith no less than an argillite carver. His flawless line and checkered and incision work are due to long practice with the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Haida Myths*, pp. 84-147; Pl. Nos. 54, 56, 74, 76, 77A, 77B, 85, 87, 89.

<sup>2</sup> Statement made by Henry Edensaw to Miss Lighthall of the Canadian Handicrafts Guild, Montreal.





175. Totems by Edensaw (*Haida*, Swanton)



burin on soft metals. Except for the materials, there is no real difference between his decoration on argillite and his engraving on native jewellery.

The round bowl of the second comport (without a lid) is cut deep into the back of the mystic Raven aflight. The bird's head is pointing forward, and the wings and tail are spread out. Space-filling eyes, feathers, and a face are engraved on the wings and the tail. The stem is similar to that of the first vessel (In the Collison collection at Prince Rupert, dated about 1904. 9" x 6" x 5". N.M.C. photo 87464. Not shown).

A more elaborate comport, with a lid, also shows the Eagle aflight, the round bowl being cut inside his back. A human-like face decorates the



176. Model of a feast house by Edensaw (*Haida*, Swanton)

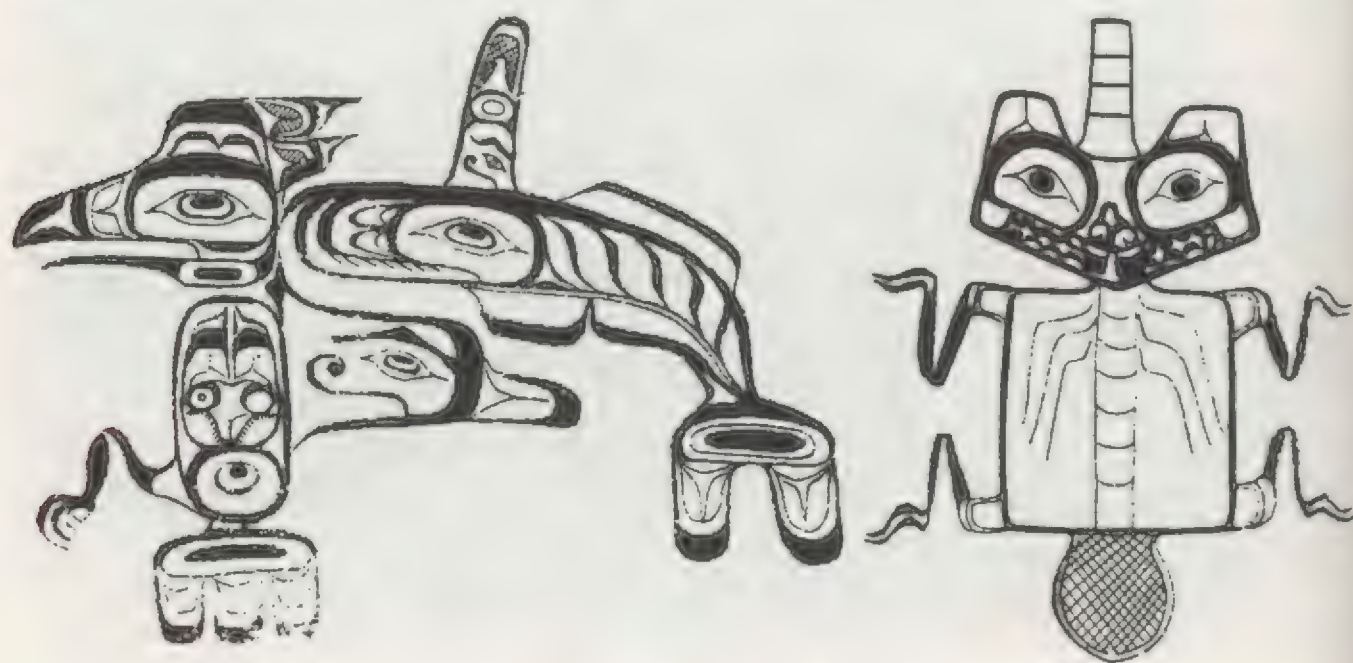


tail, and the outspread wings are engraved with eyes and feathers, as is the lid (In the Peabody Museum, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut. 17" x 13½" x 4". Lid: 6¾" x 4½". N.M.C. photo 30-5, 1950. No. 169).

One of the most important pieces by Charlie Edensaw is a comport in which Bear Mother appears under human form feeding a cub at her breast. (Cf. *Haida Myths*, No. 90, pp. 118, 151).

In the Lipsett-Ryan collection at Vancouver are two more comports in oval form, more Indian-like than the first, because of the embossed stem and all-over totem engravings. They are from the hands of an imitator of Edensaw. The Grizzly Bear, carved in high relief on the stem of the comport illustrates the well-known myth of the young Woman once ravished by the Grizzlies of the mountains. It is an important crest of a clan to which the Edensaws belonged, parts of this clan having been scattered mostly on the adjacent mainland. Back to back, the two Bears are separated by a narrow godrooned line running from the foot up to the perfect oval of the bowl, and the Woman is shown dangling head down, her feet in the mouth of the animal or between its paws. Filling the space within the bowl and on the foot are line engravings of the Grizzly and the Blackfish. The head and sharp teeth of the Bear are turned back upon the body, which is compressed within one bowl. The Bear is shown full face in the other bowl; his tongue protrudes under an upper row of even teeth. The Blackfish engraved on the foot of one of these comports has the characteristic blowhole—a small crescent—on the head, a perforated fin turned down, and a row of curved ribs alongside the body.

Round plates carved out of argillite revert to the form of foreign household utensils from Asia, introduced by mariners in the early days of navigation in the Pacific. At first only rosettes and swastikas, traced with the help of trade compasses, served as embellishment in these Haida imitations of Chinese dishes. But Edensaw and his contemporaries replaced their stilted decorations with significant designs from heraldry or nature, as in the two round plates preserved at the Sheldon Jackson Museum at Sitka, Alaska.



177. Tattooed crests by Edensaw (*Haida*, Swanton)



The Devilfish or Octopus, in relief, decorating one of these plates is stylistic, and it brings out an exceptional crest of the carver. The Devilfish under the name of Hatselt is a familiar emblem of Edensaw's clan relatives among the Tsimshyan. Seen from above, the plump sea monster sprawls over a round concave dish. Its tapering tentacles reach the flat rim, which is studded with oval inlays of ivory. In one dish, its eyes are of bead-like inlays, and the insertions in the vacant spaces are large ovals. Edensaw here found his inspiration once more in nature and made splendid use of his opportunities. In the more interesting of the two plates, the carver has filled in the surface between the tentacles with human faces, variously contorted. It is not the first time that caricature in his work is coupled with exquisite carving.

These encircling human faces differ in the following details: The lips in the round-eyed one in front of the Octopus are twisted upward around a humpy nose, and the hair is drawn forward in the form of feathers. In the second face the nose is pinched, the feathered hair is brushed to one side, and the drooping end of a tentacle is thrust into the mouth. The long hair of the woman, whose face is the third, is parted in the middle and pulled down over her cheeks, almost screening her eyes; she must be in distress, for she seems to be crying open-mouthed.

No two of the remaining six faces share the same mood, and the fourth is the only composed one. In the mouth of the fifth, the soft membrane between two tentacles is firmly held, and the last two assume an expression of singing or yelling. Perhaps because of their clamour, the long-haired woman between them pouts. At her right her neighbour's eyes are raised pathetically, showing the lower half of his irises only—an unusual treatment of the eye for Edensaw. The eyes of the other one are shut in an effort perhaps to muster power in his voice; his hair is feathered. Some of these faces are exceptional pieces of realistic portraiture and emotional expression.

In a number of argillite bowls, Edensaw used the Beaver to illustrate the Raven myth, and as a crest or a totem. Considered as a totem, it refers



178. Drawings by Edensaw (*Haida*, Swanton)



to the foreign origin of the Eagle or Thunderbird clan to which the Edensaws belong.<sup>1</sup> This Eagle clan formed part of a band of northern invaders among the Tsimshyan, at one time under the leadership of the famous warrior Legyærh. His first crests were the Thunderbird or Eagle and the Halibut; a later one, adopted from the crest of the North West Company, was the Beaver.

Like the clan that claims it as a badge, the Beaver is not native on the Queen Charlotte Islands, but it became quite common on the adjacent mainland, some fifty miles away. As a new subject for carving in Haida art, it was made familiar at Massett only after 1870 when Weehæ, a chief there, formerly under the leadership of the Edensaws, first displayed it on a totem pole, now preserved at the National Museum of Canada. Charlie Edensaw frequently carved it on argillite poles or engraved it on silver bracelets. The Beaver crest was shared by the main families of the Thunderbird or Eagle clan among the Haida on the islands, and the Tsimshyan of the Skeena and Nass rivers. For instance, Legyærh's Beaver pole still stands at Port Simpson, Tralahæt's at Gitiks on the Nass, and another at the canyon of the Skeena. About a hundred years ago, the centre of diffusion for the Beaver crest was the Skeena River canyon, after the Hudson's Bay Company had established a fur-trading post at Fort Simpson on the coast close to the Alaska border.<sup>2</sup>

Of the other Beaver bowls carved by Edensaw, four or five are typical. The most elaborate one consists of two Beaver heads at the opposite ends

<sup>1</sup> Henry Edensaw explained to Dr. J. R. Swanton that the Stistas or northeastern Eagle clan of the Haida was of mixed Tlingit and Tsimshyan origin (*Ethnology of the Haida*, Jesup . . . pp. 101-104).

<sup>2</sup> See *Totem Poles of the Gitksan*, by Marius Barbeau, National Museum of Canada, 1929, pp. 140-142.



179. Drawings by Edensaw (*Haida*, Swanton)



of a large oval bowl. The Beaver as usual is characterized by long incisors; these are like symbols for the whole animal. A short poplar stick is held in the front paws across the mouth, as it is in several totem poles of the Thunderbird clan among the Tsimshian. A human face fills the centre of the flat tail with checkered lines; it may allude to the dual nature of this totem, which at one time was human and animal-like. Abalone shell inlays in the form of disks illuminate the eyes of the Beaver and decorate the ends of the stick and the shoulder joints. Though of no special significance, a frog appears sideways on each side, perhaps merely for decoration. But cylinders on the head are symbols; they commemorate the number of feasts once given by the owners of the emblem (Collected by G. M. Dawson in 1885, for the National Museum of Canada. 13" x 7" x 3". Not shown).

Of the same type, yet simpler, the other Beaver bowl at the National Museum shows one complete animal, whose head is at one end and in whose mouth is a stick crosswise. His eyes are of abalone inlays and his teeth are ivory inlays. It is not so important a piece as the carved bowl at the Municipal Museum in Vancouver. More realistic, the Beaver in the Vancouver bowl squats on the ground, paws outstretched, with neither the stick between its incisors nor abalone shell accessories. Yet it is an elaborate piece of fine plastic quality. Eye and ear patterns are engraved on its sides, as in silver work, and checkered lines fill out the inner spaces (13" x 8½" x 4½". Not shown).

Another fine bowl decorated with abalone shells and ivory inlays is in the form of the squatting Grizzly, a familiar carving of the Edensaws and their mainland clansmen (In an old photograph of the National Museum of Canada).

A most intriguing argillite bowl, presumably by Edensaw, portrays the Beaver in massive high relief carrying a round Chinese-like pagoda on his back. Here instead of the elephant, which the carver must have seen in Asiatic sculptures on board ship, the Canadian rodent is substituted. Other representations of the elephant, its large head and long trunk, are found elsewhere in Haida art. The pagoda theme makes it clear that Edensaw yielded at times to foreign influence (although much less than his fore-runners) and enjoyed introducing elements unknown to him and his people.

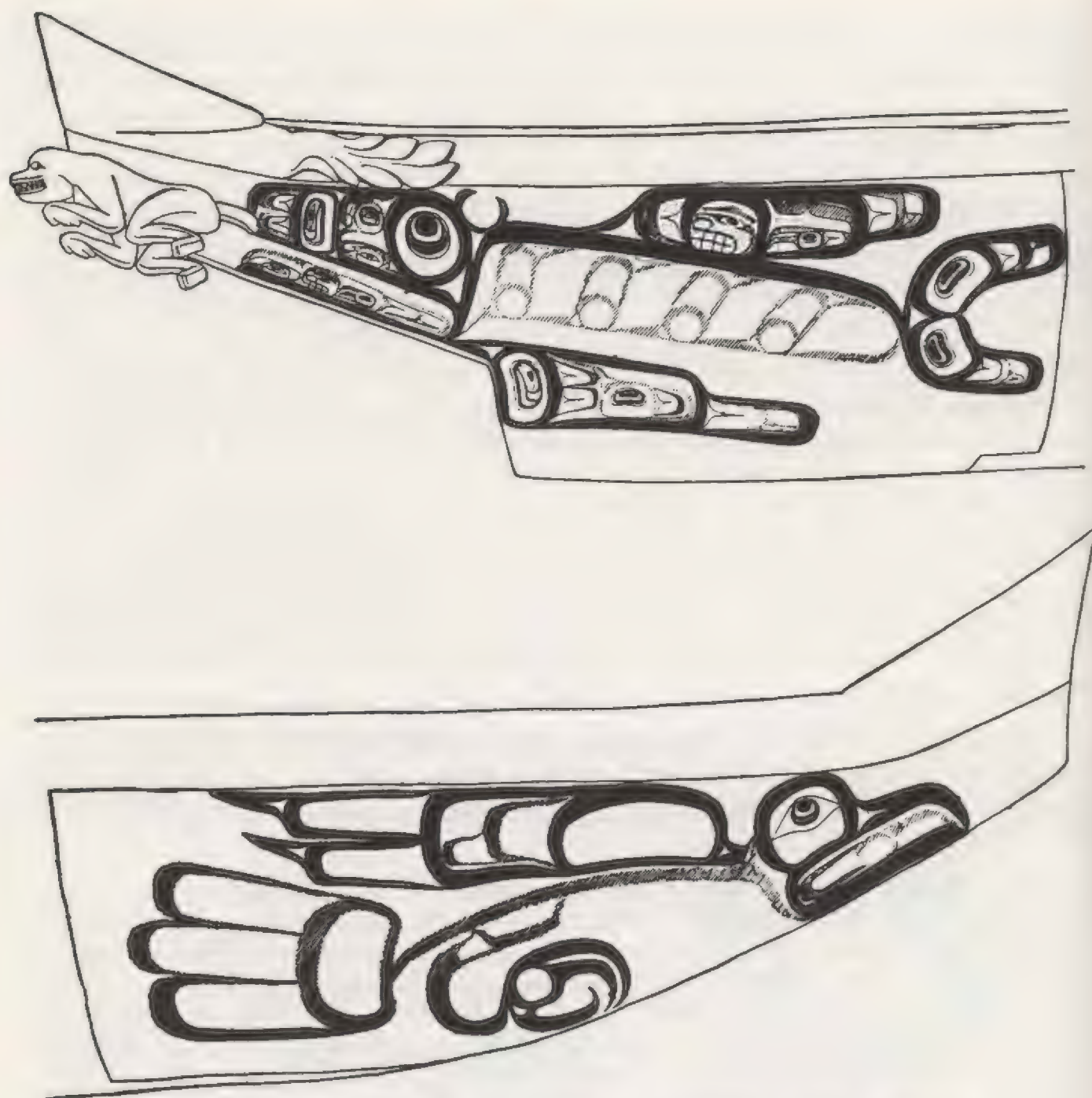
### Model Chests and Houses

Model chests and houses of argillite were seldom made, and none before 1880. Of a total of more than a dozen specimens so far traced in museums and elsewhere, only two by Edensaw represent houses of the old native type. About eleven specimens imitate ceremonial chests carved out of wood; they are parallelograms, each with a heavy lid.

One of the largest model chests is seen in a photograph of Edensaw, surrounded by some of his work, dating back to about 1890, when he was over fifty years of age (*No. 170*).<sup>1</sup> The front is decorated with the wide face of the Beaver in slight relief, with long incisors and the usual accompaniment of eyes and claws in the spaces left on the sides. As this chest

<sup>1</sup> From an old photograph collected at Massett in 1919 by Harlan I. Smith. Photog. Division, N.M.C. No. 88926. The pen-and-ink inscription on the photo reads: "Charly Edensaw, Massett, Queen Charlotte Islands. Celebrated Hydah Indian Carver of Stone, Silver and Gold."





180. Figurehead and figures on a canoe, by Edensaw (*Haida*, Swanton)

is a replica of a large wooden one with the heraldic Beaver gnawing a stick, we may seek the source of its inspiration, which is only partly aboriginal.

The oldest wooden chests on the North Pacific Coast are Niskæ or Nass River Tsimshyan, and they are among the finest samples of wood engraving in low relief, sometimes enhanced by painting. These chests are a hundred years old or less, whereas a large Beaver chest, now preserved at the National Museum of Canada, may not be sixty, and the argillite model described is of about the same date. The wide face of the Beaver, with the characteristic incisors and the front paws resting on human heads, decorates the front of this chest. It consists of a carved appliqué in relief on a flat field of engraved turned-in claws, two pairs on either side, the claws surmounted by composite deep-set eyes, ears, and feathers that fill out the place for the body.



Of the two model houses in argillite so far recorded, the one at the National Museum of Canada undoubtedly was made by Charlie Edensaw. The other, at the American Museum of Natural History, New York, dates back to the same time, as it was collected about 1879 by J. W. Powell. Possibly the most elaborate piece ever attempted, the first is more interesting for its painstaking effort than for the finish of its outward decoration. It consists of seven slabs of argillite (carefully measured, pegged or glued



181. Model of a grave box with the Shark, by Edensaw (*Haida*, Swanton)



together, and polished) of six gargoyles at the ends of the rafters from the front to the rear and of a square smoke-hole in the centre of the roof. The engravings on the four sides show the Bear totem with protruding tongue and long drooping claws. And it has no door.

The human heads serving as gargoyles or look-outs are linked with similar carvings on actual 'potlatch' or feast houses among the Haida and the Tsimshian in the 1870's. They may be derived from Gothic devices of the same type, which they could see represented in the ships and the dwellings of the white people on the North Pacific Coast. Four of these rafter gargoyles on one side have stolid faces; whereas the two others, with thick lips and wide mouths, seem to be yelling. On the other side, the reverse is true. Four out of six are singing or clamouring, and the two others remain sullen. The eyes of the vociferous ones are expressively deep; i.e. they are represented by a cavity, an unusual method in Haida carving, but a familiar one in modern European art. Oval inlays of walrus ivory dot the eye and nostril motifs all over the Grizzly Bear totem which decorates the four sides of the square house (12" x 10" x 8").

These feast houses in real life were large enough to accommodate a number of related families. During festivals they held hundreds of invited guests as well. They consisted of an open frame of heavy posts and beams which supported a roof and walls of split cedar planks. Very few of the walls were decorated outside, except among the Bella Bella and, lately, among other Kwakiutl tribes of the mainland, south of the Skeena River, where the embellishment was painted in native ochres and other pigments but they were not carved. The engraving on Edensaw's argillite model is merely fanciful.

A number of wooden models of Haida feast houses, at least some of them by Edensaw, were carved for the Chicago World's Fair in 1893 and later exhibited in the halls of the Field Museum. If this demand for models of varied types followed familiar channels, even at this late date, it helped to keep native craftsmen from laying down their tools altogether.

### Illustrations for Museums and Publishers

Although Edensaw devoted most of his prolonged career to his work for the white people, he shared at times in the activities and social life of his own people. Early in life he acquired from his uncles the traditional handicrafts of his tribe. He learned wood carving from his uncle Albert Edward Edensaw, the noted Haida chief of the north and one of the best totem pole carvers of his day, and argillite work from his father's people when he lived with them at Skidegate to the south. Eventually he became the most industrious and accomplished artist of his generation on the whole North Pacific Coast.

More precisely, the dual sources of his craftsmanship were, first, his mother's people of the Stistas group of Eagles of San-town (*sangal lanas*), formerly of Skidegate inlet, but later of Kyusta to the northwest (their main crest was the Beaver); and secondly, his paternal kinsmen of the Kwaduwas group of Skidegate, which is not so definitely identified. The Kwaduwas seemed to be Dr. Swanton's Naikun Raven folk, whose name was Kwadu or Standing-Water-People. Their main crests were the



Grizzly Bear and the Killer-Whale (Swanton's *The Haida . . .*, Jesup . . ., pp. 270, VII).

Edensaw, because of his industry and clan connections, rose in the ranks at a time when his sea-faring nation was fast heading toward self-destruction. Warlike pursuits in the recent past and devastating trade relations with the white people had been playing havoc all along the coast. And Edensaw must have deplored the trend of events, without being able to do anything to stem it, as the Haida population was dwindling yearly from over 8,000 around 1840—he was born in the previous decade—to less than 2,000 in 1880, and to about 800 (consisting of half-breeds) at the time of his death in 1924.

His silver work in the 1870's was already as good as that of the older native silversmith, Sitka Jack, a Tlingit of Alaska, whose art can be traced back partly to local Russian sources. Edensaw's argillite carving followed the demands of the trade, with which he was keeping a personal touch, for he travelled north and south from Juneau in Alaska down to the new State of Washington. Seeking his themes not only in the totems or crests and the legends of his people but also at first hand in life and nature, he never failed to find customers who showed keen interest in his work and personality.

As his sales procured him a good living, he invested his cash returns in the 'potlatch', or native banking system, and by stages rose to the chieftainship of his own clan at San-town, or Tow Hill at Rosespit. After the establishment of a Hudson's Bay Company post and the coming of missionary Collison in 1880, he moved to the new town of Massett near the old village of Yan. He presumably never was formally elected, as the 'potlatch' system no longer was in force; moreover he may not have cared. Yet he implicitly held this rank, particularly in the estimate of outsiders.

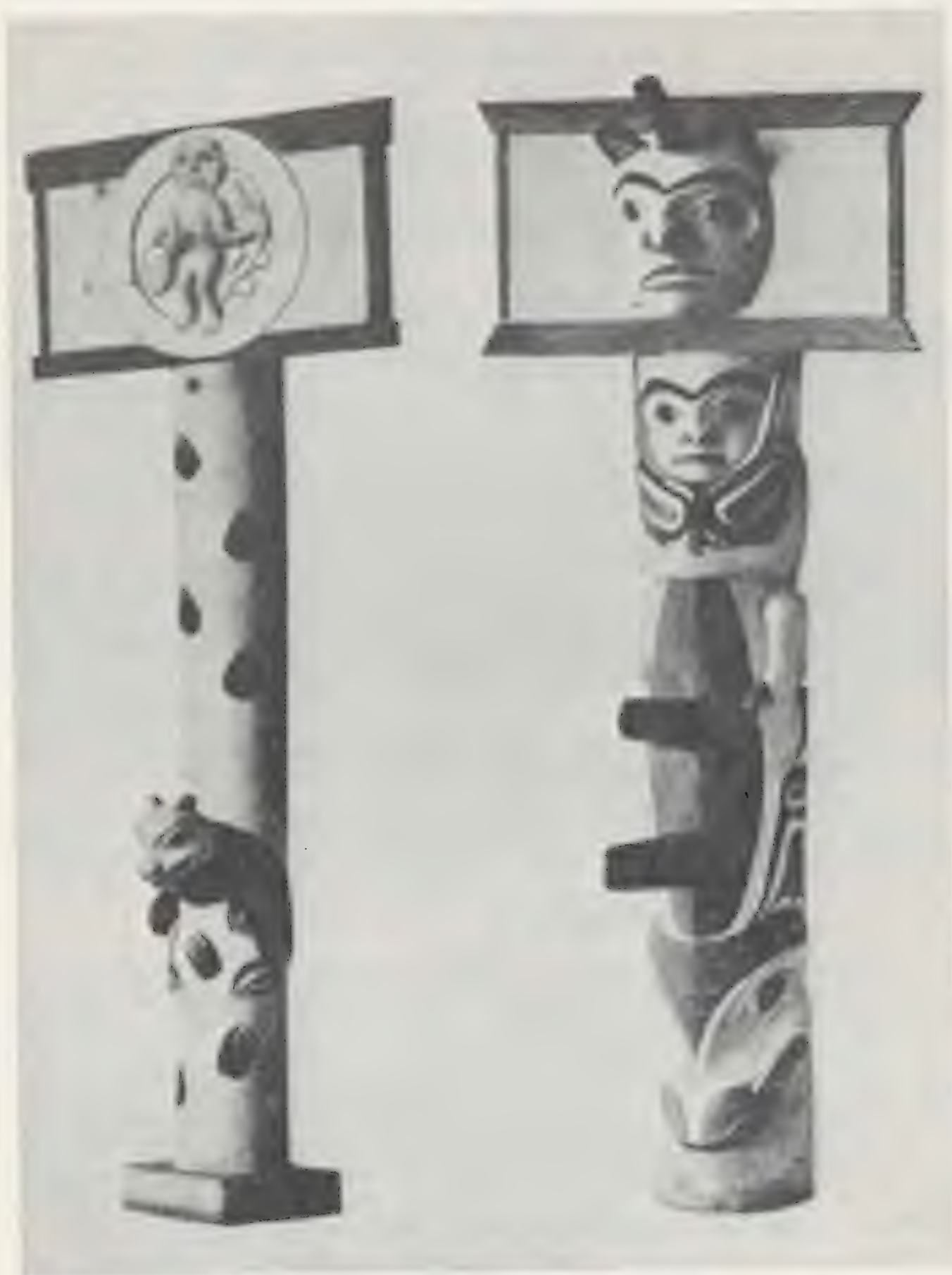
In his lifetime, he witnessed stirring events in the ebbing tribal life but managed to keep away from the whirlpools that engulfed many others, among them his famous clansman Legyærh of the mainland. The story of Legyærh's fall has been recounted by Dr. H. G. Barnett in his "Personal conflicts and cultural change."<sup>1</sup>

Legyærh's attitude toward the white man was one of mixed feelings. A born seeker of wealth and prestige, he craved the benefits of the fur trade but resented the meddling of the missionaries in the conduct of local affairs. Although he had welcomed the Hudson's Bay Company and granted it a foothold on his territories, he challenged William Duncan's right, as a missionary, to outlaw the 'potlatch' system of feast-giving and investing property in public, and in 1863 forced him to withdraw from the sphere of the trading post at Port Simpson to the sanctuary of Metlakatla. But inner dissension at home and a deadly epidemic brought about his surrender to the new ways and his final frustration.

Edensaw never tried to emulate his bold kinsman in anything but the activities of the coast trade. As he belonged to a "progressive" generation that had already bartered away its birthright, he remained on good terms with all foreigners, whether they were traders, gold miners, adventurers,

<sup>1</sup> *Social Forces*, Vol. 20, No. 2, Dec., 1941.





182. Totems and grave box by Edensaw (*Haida*, Swanton)



coastal tribes that were former enemies, or missionaries. His son, Robert, became a school teacher and preacher. As a craftsman, he was singled out by ethnographers and museum men as a willing and useful helper.

As early as 1878, G. M. Dawson, later the Director of the Geological Survey of Canada, became acquainted with his uncle (perhaps with him) in the course of his explorations on the Queen Charlotte Islands, and he wrote<sup>1</sup> "Chief Edensaw (It-in-sa) . . . is now chief of the Ya-tza village, west of Virago Sound, the Kung village of Virago Sound, over which he formerly presided, being nearly abandoned for the new site. Ten years or more ago, his village was on the south side of Parry Passage, but this was now being altogether given up, and the houses are rapidly crumbling away . . . A predecessor of Edensaw would have exchanged names with Captain Douglas" (one of the early sea-captains to enter into contact with the Haida).

About a decade later, Dr. Franz Boas, the dean of American Anthropologists, began to consult Charlie Edensaw on the art of the Haida and to secure from him specimens for museums and illustrations for books, which usually were from his hands. Of him Dr. Boas later said that he was "the best carver and painter among the Haida."<sup>2</sup> In several publications, he reproduced his drawings to illustrate his work in silver, argillite, and wood, and he frequently quoted his opinions as to the identity of native crests. In Dr. Boas' *Primitive Art*, we find splendid drawings by Edensaw of the Wasco, Beaver, Shark, Sculpin, Bear, and Eagle crests, and illustrations of the Creation story.

In 1882, Herr Jacobsen collected some of his carvings for the *Volkerkunde* in Berlin, among them, a wooden model of a totem pole that illustrates parts of the Raven myth; the Halibut with a Raven on his back, the Raven holding his broken bill in his hands, and the Raven wearing on his head the Frog emblem and the three cylinders of chieftainship and keeping two children under his wings (Plate 7. *The North-West Coast of America* . . . From the collections of the museum at Berlin).

As a number of museums in America and Europe were being equipped at the turn of the century, and private collectors stepped into the field, the demand for North Pacific Coast materials was heavy. Edensaw's work, being available, was eagerly sought.

Most of the wooden totem pole models reproduced in *Contributions to the Ethnology of the Haida* (Jesup Expedition) were carved in 1900-1901 by Charlie Edensaw at Dr. Swanton's request (*Nos. 171-175*). As a repertory, they embrace more themes than a single craftsman belonging to the Eagle or Raven groups was in the habit of appropriating when carving for strangers. Among them are found the emblems of the Beaver, Wasco, the Eagle, the Frog, Dzellarhons the clan ancestress, the Raven, the Cormorant, the Humming-Bird, the Cumulus-Cloud, which either belong to him or to clans related to him. For this special purpose he also appropriated those claimed by the Ravens: the Grizzly, the Moon, the Mountain Goat, the

<sup>1</sup> *Report on the Queen Charlotte Islands*, 1878, Geological Survey of Canada. P. 160B.

<sup>2</sup> *Primitive Art*, 1927, p. 212.





183. Dr. C. F. Newcombe (right) and Edensaw

Raven-Fin, the Killer-Whale, and the Two- or Three-finned Killer, the Snag, the Dogfish, Nanasimgyet (the hero in a myth and crest figure), the Sea-Lion, the Thunderbird, and the Flicker. Illustrations of myths or stories also included the Kingyi and the six upholders of the long pole; the Raven stealing the Salmon; the Beaver and the Salmon; the Raven holding the Sun in his beak; the Butterfly and the Raven; the Halibut Woman with the bucket and salal leaves; and the Grizzly-Bear Woman.

The model by Edensaw of a feast house with three carved frontal poles appearing on Plate IV (Swanton's), with mixed crests and illustrations, could not actually have been executed full-sized with public toleration. In it are carved the Raven-Halibut, an Eagle crest and myth, the Grizzly Bear, Nanasimgyet, and the illustrations of the Haida story of Su'san, Killer-Whale, and Bird-of-the-Air (*No. 176*).

A set of excellent crayon drawings of tattooed crests, which the Haida notables had on their bodies in the manner of a sailor's tattooing, shows that Edensaw was an expert at this kind of work. They were made for Dr. Boas in 1897 and reproduced by Dr. Swanton in Plates XXII and XXIII. Several of Edensaw's excellent black and white sketches, also reproduced, are of the Raven inside the Whale, the Hagwelarh or sea monster, the Flicker, the Woodpecker, the Mosquito, the Humming-Bird, the Frogs, and the Eagles caught by the Shellfish (*Nos. 177-179*).

A double mask of wood by Edensaw is now preserved at the Pitt-Rivers Museum, Oxford. It shows that the carver did not restrict his materials to silver and argillite. This double-mask with a Raven-like head and bill outside and the man-like face of the Thunderbird inside is an ingenious contrivance consisting of several carved pieces on hinges. The performer, wearing it on his head during secret society performances



by a blazing fire at night, opened or closed it by means of strings, while the weird voice of the mystic spirit inside was produced by mysterious box-whistles of cedar. The secret society performances, introduced by Legyærh among the Tsimshian and by his kinsmen among the Haida in the second part of the last century, never assumed the same importance in the north as among the Kwakiutl tribes on the sea-coast to the south. An imitation of the Kwakiutl models, the Edensaw mask here excels its prototypes in ingenuity and plastic quality. The statuette of a little man on top, pulled up only when the mask was thrown open, meant that the presumed owner of the mask, Edensaw himself, with long flowing hair and a tool in his right hand, "was the greatest chief on the Queen Charlotte islands" (Swanton, Fig. 20, p. 145).

Charlie Edensaw and his son made themselves useful to Dr. Swanton during his ten months' investigation in 1900-1901. They gave him more information on native totems and symbolic figures than any others, and they provided illustrations. Of them Swanton wrote: "The father (Charlie Edensaw) of my interpreter, Henry Edensaw, belonged to the Stastas, he being of the Middle-Town. Edensaw's grandfather was a Raven of Rosespit. Part of the Stastas band of Kyusta resided at Naden Harbour, and a still larger part around Rosespit" (pp. 68-71). When Edensaw failed in some cases to identify certain patterns on gambling sticks, Dr. Swanton concluded, "This fact indicates the marked individuality of each artist in combining the details of his designs" (*Nos. 180-182*).

A number of remarkable Edensaw totems in black, red, green, and yellow were recently included by Miss Alice Ravenhill of Victoria in an album of *Reproductions . . . for the Indian Schools of British Columbia*. Among them we find the Chain of Eagles and the Giant Clam, the Red-Winged Flicker, the Humming-Bird, the Mosquito, the Woodpecker, and the border of Frogs. The argillite and silver patterns by Edensaw given in this album include the picture of one of his finest argillite boxes, with the Beaver front, the Wasco heads on the ends, and an elaborate Wasco group in the round on the lid (Charts VI, VII, XI).

For many years Charlie Edensaw held the spotlight in Haida craftsmanship at home and abroad. At home his influence on his contemporaries was considerable, especially at Massett in the north, and abroad he became the mouthpiece for his own nation. He was everywhere accepted as a typical exponent of the art, past and present, not only of his island folk but, implicitly, of other neighbouring nations. Museums and ethnologists contributed much to his success and reputation. By considering his work as representative of the traditional art of the North Pacific Coast, they were involuntarily creating a misconception by over-emphasis. Of all the native craftsmen he was the least typical and may be considered the only native professional carver. His work was more abundant, more widely diffused, and better known than that of any other Indian carver, past or contemporary. By its impact over a number of years, it eventually put a stamp on Haida art that is not wholly authentic. For his art was novel and modern, although it had sprung partly from rich home sources. It belongs to the last quarter of the past century and the first decade of the present. His illustrations of the Raven myth of Creation, his ornate bowls, his exquisite silver bracelets and other jewellery were well represented



at the Chicago World's Fair in 1893, as well as his miniature totem poles, carved chests, and models of feast houses.

### Photographs of the Edensaws

A group of Haida in an old photograph at the National Museum of Canada, presumably by G. M. Dawson, on August 23, 1878 (No. 266). Edensaw and Hoo-ya, chiefs at Ya-tza and Massett stand in the centre (Not shown).

Dr. C. F. Newcombe to the right; and a Haida, presumably Edensaw (No. 183).

The monument at Massett of Edensaw, the Elder, with the inscription  
 "In memory of/ Albert Ed. Edensaw/ Head-chief of North Isld /  
 Q.C.J./ Born 1822 / Died 189... / A member of St. John Church//  
 A staunch friend to the white man / He heroically saved the lives of  
 Captain Rooney / and his crew of the Sch. Susan Sturges / Attacked  
 by Indians Sept. 26. 1852 / For which he is held in grateful remem-  
 brance (N.M.C. Photo 4665. Not shown).

The monument, at Massett, inscribed: "In memory of Charles Edensaw /  
 Died / Sept. 12, 1924 / Age 85 years / Thy will be done" (N.M.C.  
 Photo 141-6. Not shown).

### THE BROTHERS WALTER KINGEGO AND CHARLES GWAYTIHL, OF MASSETT ( -1912)

Of the personal lives of Kingego and his brother Gwaytihl, sculptors and fellow craftsmen of Massett, we know little. But we do know that some of their statuettes and high reliefs rank with the best in Haida art. Kingego, like his contemporaries, was a sculptor of argillite statuettes representing medicine-men, chiefs in regalia, warriors, and odd types from among his people; he also is credited with a "lot of large poles." Gwaytihl carved only wood, never argillite, and his subjects were almost the same as his brother's, plus model houses, canoes, and small grave poles.

The full name of Kingego for the white people was Walter Kingego, and that of his brother, Charles Gwaytihl. The meaning of Kingego's native name has something to do with his background. It was "Hiding-his-own-fame" or, as given in the context, "One who does not want his fame to be broadcast." The name of Gwaytihl, recorded by Dr. Swanton (Jesup . . . , p. 271), is K.'wai'ehl; it means "He-became-the-Eldest."

These brothers, members of the *Stlenga-lahnos* sub-clan of the Eagles of Rosespit and Massett, were of modest extraction. *Stlenga-lahnos*, according to Dr. Swanton, means "People who dwell in the back part of the village" or Rear-Town-People. As their phratry was the Raven, their main crests were the Killer-Whale, the Grizzly, and the Thunderbird, i.e., they belonged to the old native element, who not so long ago were without totems and exogamic taboos. If they were "very modest," as Alfred Adams, their compatriot, puts it, it was probably because they felt inferior. They were of a Rear-Town family and of the Raven phratry,



and most of the carvers belonged to the opposite clans in the Eagle phratry, which overshadowed the Ravens.

Although their birth dates cannot be ascertained, they were, on the whole, contemporaries of Charlie Edensaw, though perhaps older. Gwaytihl died in 1912 (according to Alfred Adams). He was a good ninety. Rheumatism affected his hands in his old age. He used to fast in the old way; he would not drink or eat for forty days. Adams was acquainted with these brothers and used to visit them once in a while.

The Rear-Town brothers Kingego and Gwaytihl had decided preferences when choosing subject matter for statuettes made for white buyers. They showed in plastic form their own people in a few of their activities, whereas their fellow craftsmen carved crests, plates, and illustrations of legends.

ISAAC CHAPMAN,  
THE CRIPPLE  
(1880 ?–1908 ?)

The story of Isaac Chapman, the crippled carver of Massett, has come down to us in a mist of make-believe and fiction. Yet he belongs to our time, for he died about 1908 while in his late twenties. The era of tall tales lingered on the North Pacific Coast much later than elsewhere in America, and it was only when the Canadian National Railways pushed their railhead up to Prince Rupert, close to the Alaska border on the coast, that prehistory and pioneer days recoiled and adventure vanished at the impact of a time-table.

Until then the Hudson's Bay Company and independent traders, trail packers, missionaries, Indian agents, and gold miners had brought forward the white man in his conquest of the forested and ocean-bound wilderness. The natives—mostly the Haida and the Tsimshyan—for many years had entered the casual service of the sea-



184. Frog, Raven creator, Bear Mother, Beaver, in a Chapman totem



hunters and of their own accord had travelled in their large dug-outs down the coast to Victoria and Port Townsend. The rambling ways of shifting frontiers made for a distorted outlook on current events. The life story of Chapman is a case in point.

His own name needs checking. At first it was not Chapman, but Bennett. His adoptive father's name (according to Alfred Adams) was Benjamin Bennett so it became his; and young Bennett, the adopted son, also was known as Ben Bennett. His surname might have been Sykes instead (according to Peter Hill), for his real father, deceased, was James Sykes, a chief of Kunlanos at Hielen near Sand-Spit (where a clam cannery later stood). White men's names at the time were given at random by the missionaries to the Indians at baptism, or by the traders for book-keeping purposes. But the Indians among themselves, particularly the leaders in their feasts, retained the titles that had come down to them from the past and linked them to a clan within a phratry.

And so it happened with Chapman (*alias* Bennett or Sykes). As a member of an Eagle clan, he was known at home under the Haida name of Skelay, and his true father was Kwaiwas, a leading chief of the Yagulahnos clan in the Raven phratry. On his mother's side, as an Eagle or Thunderbird, he was related to Charlie Edensaw (according to Adams and Yæhltaisee), but not closely (according to Peter Hill). He often associated with Edensaw and, according to Alfred Adams, trained under him as a carver of argillite and a painter of canoes.

### The Glamourized Edensaw Rivalry

The confusion of native and frontier names and romantic reminiscences made it easy for Cunningham, the white trader and former missionary, and his half-breed son George, to "spin good yarns" about some of their Haida customers: first of all, Chapman and the Edensaws of Massett. The following story, put down in writing by George Cunningham of Port Essington, at the mouth of the Skeena River, served as an advertisement for Chapman's large collection of argillite carvings at one time exhibited at the Provincial Museum in Victoria, and later at the Municipal Museum of Prince Rupert.

These carvings are the work of two contemporary and competitive artists, chief Charlie Edensaw of the Haidas, who died shortly after the end of World War I, and of a lame Indian boy, Chapman by name. The label reads as follows:

The history of Chapman is as pathetic as it is entrancing. In one of the intertribal wars of the last century, his parents, who belonged to the Bella Bella tribe, were captured by the Haidas, that war-like nation known as the Vikings of the Pacific. Young Chapman was born while his parents were in captivity, and his family, after a prolonged association with their conquerors, preferred to remain on the island after they were freed rather than go back to the mainland. The boy, a cripple and an alien, grew up at Massett, and made friends around him. At a very early age he displayed a precocious ability as a carver, using rude tools of bone and shell manufactured by himself, but he died before reaching his thirtieth year. His skill was such, however, that in his numerous carvings he produced some of the choicest samples of the art as preserved in this collection . . .

Mr. Cunningham [the father] first met Charlie Edensaw, then a comparatively young man, at the time when he [Cunningham] was travelling on a lumber schooner that called at Massett, an Indian village near the northeast end of the Queen Charlotte Islands. This



meeting ripened into friendship, and during subsequent visits the white man had the opportunity to observe the work of the chief and of the crippled boy, the son of a slave.

Competition seems to have existed between the chief and the cripple, the chief holding himself above any recognition of the poor alien lad, never addressing him directly, and unable to check his pride and jealousy . . . When the chief, later, visited Cunningham and could not help noticing some of Chapman's carvings in the trader's possession, he proudly dismissed them with the remark, 'This may be all very good, but I will show you something better', and he would proceed to carve, on the spot, a new and finer piece, illustrating his own family story.

The most highly prized of the totems passed from the hands of Charlie Edensaw to Cunningham senior at such a moment of pique. It turned out to be a genealogical tree of the Edensaw family, and Edensaw was known to concentrate upon the history of his own clan . . .

So fanciful a story of rivalry between a master carver and his slave did not fail to travel a long way. Many outsiders have read it in the past fifty years, and two catalogues of the National Gallery of Canada have repeated it, the first for an *Exhibition of Canadian West Coast Art—Native and Modern*, December 1927 (p. 11), and the second, more fully, in 1927, for the *Exposition d'art canadien* (p. 38) held at Le Musée du Jeu de Paume in Paris.

The grain of truth in it is that the Cunninghams<sup>1</sup> really were acquainted with Edensaw and Chapman, and that their argillite collection contains many fine carvings, mostly from the hands of the younger carver. Although the story of captivity or slavery may not be entirely true, it echoes of the tales of coastal migrations of the natives from the north. In one of them, an early Legyærh is said to have been born among the Bella Bella, and, having been ostracized there, to have moved up north to the Skeena or to



186. Eagle, Shark, Raven

←  
185. Raven, Thunderbird, Bear, by Chapman

<sup>1</sup> Robert Cunningham married a Tsimshyan woman of Port Simpson, according to Mrs. Elizabeth Wilson of Fort Rupert; and Mrs. Cunningham's sister was married to Weehæ, the (Haida) head chief of Massett.



the Queen Charlotte Islands. His relatives on the Islands became the Beaver clan of Kyusta, Tow-Hill, and Massett. Charlie Edensaw (an Eagle chief) and Chapman (an Eagle clansman) were at least distantly related to Legyærh; both had descended from the once ostracized Bella Bella ancestor. One could not have been the slave of the other. And Chapman (according to his contemporary Peter Hill of Massett) belonged to "one of the higher ranks in the old time. His mother had married one of the chiefs who, at old Massett, occupied a chosen place at the end of the village."

If the rivalry between the older and younger carver ever existed, it may have disclosed itself only in a mild way. Edensaw may have criticized some of Chapman's work, as it was largely derivative of his own and rather delicate for the material. Or he may have shown childish envy when confronted with rows of small totems all purchased from a much younger man of his own tribe, who was then in his heyday, whereas he, Edensaw, had "lost the grip of his hand on his tools" after an illness in 1910.

### A Short but Fruitful Career

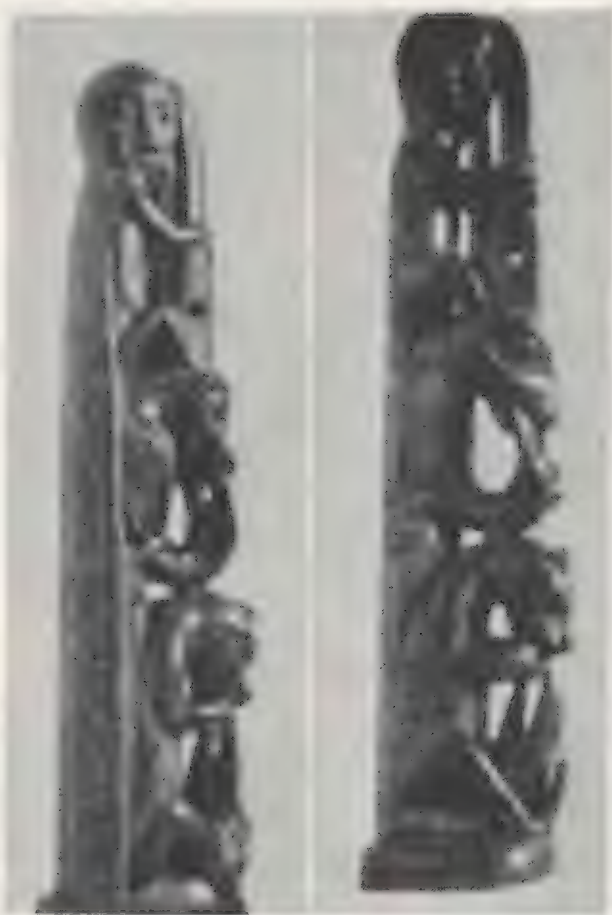
Chapman, whose Haida name was Skelay, was not considered an alien by anybody on the islands. If his forefathers in the maternal line went back to a foreign strand from the mainland, they had merged at every generation with the local population; the newly enforced exogamy compelled them, as Eagles or Thunderbirds, to marry into Killer-Whale and Raven families. Chapman's tools for one thing never were of "rude bone and shell manufactured by himself," as stated by Cunningham, but were of tempered steel. For more than a century the native craftsmen had secured metals and tools from the mariners, and they made knives and burins from steel files to suit their own requirements. But they owed their talent and manual skill to their mainland ancestors, who had long been in touch with the Russian Trade Company, and to Hudson's Bay Company. This is implied in one of their own traditions, as recorded by Dr. Swanton (Jesup . . . , pp. 103-104).

All the northern Eagles are related . . . they had spread from the direction of Rosespit. There are certain reasons for thinking that most of them once formed a single group, to which the term Gitins was applied. The traditions of the Stastas and its branches point to a foreign origin—part Tlingit, part Tsimshyan . . . The Stastas claim to be of foreign extractions . . . Some of the Eagles' (Haida) deities, such as Master Carpenter and The-Singers, are connected with the arts for which the Haidas were more or less indebted to the mainland people . . .

A cripple from birth, according to people who remembered him, Chapman grew up with a handicap that forced him to seek a subsistence mostly in craftsmanship at home rather than in the outdoor callings of his tribe. Yet at times he followed his family to the fishing preserve of Langara or North Island. One day, his boat capsized, and as a result of the shock and exposure, his health failed him. Like many others among the younger Indians, he may have died of consumption.

Chapman (according to Alfred Adams) "gave his whole time to slate carving"; yet (according to Peter Hill) he "divided his time between slate carving and canoe painting"—i.e. painting totem-like figures on the prow





187. Nanasimyet, Whale, Grizzly



188. Nanasimyet, Whale, Raven, Bear

of large cedar dug-outs. He never carved wood or silver, though most of his fellow craftsmen handled various materials with equal facility.

His beginnings as a carver remain obscure. Peter Hill states that Chapman had no chance when young to learn anything about the art, yet he learned anyhow. He had a natural gift for carving portraits, which were good likenesses, and he finished his work well. "When he carved a hand with fingers, he made them look like a real hand with fingers. He followed nature closely" (according to Adams). In plastic work, none of his tribesmen ever had as delicate a touch or as smooth a finish as he had. His carvings, mostly small totem poles and statuettes, soon grew very popular. "The people talked a good deal about him . . . He sold some of his work at Ketchikan, Alaska, and in early Prince Rupert. George Cunningham bought a great deal from him; his last lot was from him . . . The people of the mainland preferred his work to that of others." Most of the Cunningham collection, at the Municipal Museum at Prince Rupert in recent years, is from his hands, and also a part of the Deasy collection, since broken up. He usually restricted himself to totem poles, yet a model of a carved and painted Indian house at Massett is ascribed to him.

His facile realism, his cleverness in undercutting, his delicacy, and the charm of his compositions were in advance of the work of his contempo-



ries. Some of his interpretations of people and animals, particularly the Frog, are exquisite. Yet he met with pitfalls and failed to avoid them. People who observed him, like the Massett trader Alfred Adams, dismiss his work with the remark that it "was a copy of the earlier models, those of Edensaw and the Elders." Yet they admit that some figures "may have been his own invention."

It is not surprising that Edensaw should have been critical of the younger man, whose treatment lacked the solidity of his own carvings; these usually remained within the block. "Charlie Edensaw," according to Adams, "used to criticize the work of other carvers and laugh at it, not because he thought his work superior, but because the others' was new to him, different from his. He (Edensaw) was an extraordinary carver, the best among the Haida." Because of the brittleness of argillite, many of Chapman's carvings have been seriously damaged, especially those whose figures project outside the mass.

### The Contents of His Totem Poles

Chapman's work consists mostly of totem poles, from fourteen inches down to a few inches high. The tallest among them is the Beaver, Eagle, and Caterpillar totem at Prince Rupert Museum.<sup>1</sup> Another, 12 inches high, with the Thunderbird and the Whale, is in Mrs. Agnes Brentzen's collection at Port Simpson. The average pole is from 5 to 8 inches high. These carvings were made of a size that suited most customers. The Cunningham collection alone comprises over fifty pieces. Other specimens of Chapman's work were found in the Deasy collection, in Mrs. Brentzen's,



189. Kidnapped Woman, the Whale, Thunderbird!



190. Woman and Killer-Whale, Eagle

<sup>1</sup> The collection has been withdrawn since.





191. Bear Mother, Raven, Grizzly  
and Woman



192. Bear, Thunderbird  
and Whale

and in the private collection of the late Duncan Campbell Scott in Ottawa—these last being from the Deasy collection.

The repertory of Chapman, as revealed in these collections, contains about 155 distinct figures belonging to forty subjects or themes, most of them totems or mythical animals. This repertory is the most extensive, with the exception of Edensaw's.

In his illustrations of ancient myths, Chapman followed in the trail of his elders. Yet his figures and style were individual and spontaneous—he never quite repeated himself. A detailed analysis of his varied interpretations within the distinct clusters would greatly enrich our understanding of recent developments in Haida craftsmanship. But here it must be brought down to a mere summary.

The Raven creator or transformer, initiated a generation before, mostly by Charlie Edensaw, as a theme in plastic art, occasionally reappears in Chapman's work. In his tallest and finest pole (No. 87404,5. No. 184), the Raven is seen holding a small bird in his bill. This bird is meant for the Eagle, his companion, as spoken of in the Skidegate myth of Creation. But



in the Massett versions, the Butterfly is the Eagle's substitute. The sitting Beaver at the base of the pole gnaws his poplar stick, and the head and wings of the Raven, turned downward, occupy most of the space in front of his body. In the Raven's bill is the rolled-up house of the Beaver, and a tiny salmon head appears at one end of the bundle. The figures are carved admirably, and nowhere in Edensaw's work can we find a better illustration of the Eagle or Butterfly and Beaver episode.

The Butterfly Slarhqam and the Raven travelled together while the world was still in chaos, as an excerpt from a story by Dr. Swanton will show:<sup>1</sup>

Raven and Butterfly came to a large town, where the people offered Raven food, but he was too proud to speak to them directly; and Eagle, who acted as his speaker, deceived them, so as to obtain all the food for himself, leaving only the burned skins of dried salmon for Raven. After that, they came to a chasm; and Raven made Butterfly fall into it by inducing him to cross upon a piece of kelp, which he turned over, when Butterfly was part of the way across. Butterfly was drowned...

Another episode usually connected with the Beaver and illustrated in the same pole, is reported in Dr. Swanton's "*Haida Texts and Myths*," (*Bureau of American Ethnology*, Bull. 29, pp. 113-114):

The Raven brought out a salmon... Then he went behind the screen. A lake lay there. From it a creek flowed away in which was a fish trap. The fish trap was so full that it looked as if someone were shaking it. There were plenty of salmon in it... Then he pulled out the fish trap, folded it together, and laid it down at the edge of the lake. He rolled it up with the lake and house, put them under his arm, and pulled himself up into a tree that stood close by. They were not heavy for his arm... After he had sat there a while, (the Beaver) came. His house and lake were gone from their usual place. After looking around for some time he glanced up. The Raven sat there with his property. Then he went back and brought out (another Beaver); both came towards him. They went quickly to the tree, and began working upon it with their teeth. When it began to fall, the Raven went to another tree... After he had gone ahead of them upon many trees, they gave it up and travelled for a long time... Without a home, they found a lake at last and settled down in it... Then, after the Raven had travelled around inland for a while, he came to a large open place. He unrolled the lake. There it lay. He did not let the fish trap or the house go. He kept them to teach the Seaward people (mainland) and the Shoreward (Queen Charlotte islands) people...

The Frog is represented sitting at the top of this pole; its mouth is half open and its elbows rest on its knees; and once again, it appears in the middle of the pole, its face upward and its tongue projecting into the mouth of Bear Mother, who holds her two cubs in her arms.

The Raven appears at the top in a smaller pole (87391. No. 185). With his human-like hands he is holding his long bill, closed. This posture reveals that he is about to play a trick on his interpreter, the Eagle, who sits below him, with his beak curved down almost as sharply as that of the Thunderbird, or perhaps this bird is meant for the Butterfly, who is elsewhere shown with an eagle-like bill. The interchange of the Eagle and the Butterfly in the mythology has influenced their plastic pattern, the Butterfly assuming the characteristics of the Eagle. The lowest figure seems to be the Grizzly Bear, holding his long drooping tongue in his hands.

In a third pole (87392. No. 186) the Raven sits at the base, his bill slightly open as if croaking. The Butterfly Slarhqam is in front of him in the form of a bird mask, with a bill sharply bent down and a head covered with well-combed human hair.

<sup>1</sup> Swanton, Jesup, p. 28.



The Nanasingyet (or Native Orpheus) myth was very popular on the North Pacific Coast, and Chapman, of course, made use of it too. He availed himself of it three times, and admirably in the present collections. In a first example (*No. 187*), the kidnapped woman holds on to the long dorsal fin of the Killer-Whale under her feet; her face, with staring eyes and open mouth, expressing fear, is turned sideways to the right. The fin is carved in the form of a long bill, semi-open, near the base of which is a round eye, perhaps the usual dorsal fin perforation. The maker was cleverly alluding here to the Crane spirit in disguise, as the Crane was to protect the woman and her husband in their under-sea voyage and trials. The Killer-Whale is boldly reduced to a smaller size than that of a woman and is curled forward so as to occupy little room. The tip of the tail, turned upward in the form of a human face, is inserted in the mouth of the fish. The Grizzly Bear, eating a fish, occupies the lowest third of the pole, and the Crane's head, turned upward at the base, alludes to other parts of the Nanasingyet myth.

The Haida version of the Nanasingyet which Chapman had in mind is reported by Dr. Swanton (Jesup . . . , pp. 202-203) (Cf. *Haida Myths*).

The woman kidnapped by the Killer-Whale appears in four other Chapman poles. In one of them (87398; 9, 87403. *No. 188*) she holds on with both hands to a dorsal fin, which is taller than herself, and her head is turned sideways to the left. Her eyes are closed in anguish. The Killer-Whale



193. Bear on Killer-Whale, Grizzly

194. Frog, Bear (repeated)



under her, quite small in comparison, bites his tail, on which a human face with a long aquiline nose is decoratively engraved. The lower figures illustrate other episodes of the same myth; yet they are less firmly linked together than in the first pole. They are the Raven holding the Frog in his bill, and in the lower half the Bear biting the wide tail of the Sea-Otter. This last figure brings in the episode of the husband killing the Sea-Otter and the wife washing its skin in the sea before being kidnapped by the Killer-Whale. If the husband assumes the features of the Bear, it is because he belonged to an inland people whose totem was the Grizzly. The reason for the Raven's presence here is less obvious. Perhaps it is because the Killer-Whale was the main crest of the Raven phratry among the islanders.

In the second pole (No. 87398, 9. *No. 189*), the kidnapped Woman is shown once more, this time facing forward and having long flowing hair. She sits behind the Killer-Whale's fin, which is tilted to the left of her face. The Whale, taller in comparison to the earlier instances, is bent forward, but the tail, although curled up, does not reach the mouth, where the Sea-Otter is inserted crosswise. The significance of the two lower figures on the totem, the Thunderbird and the Black Whale, has no connection with those above.

In a third pole illustrating the Nanasingyet myth (not shown), the kidnapped woman holds on with both hands to the broad fin of the Killer-Whale under her; the tail of the Whale wraps itself around her face (to the right) and over her head; the large side-fins of the fish here rise up to her elbows. At the base of the pole, the Raven sits, and the Frog under its bill is turned, head down (Cf. *Haida Myths*. No. 259).

In a fourth pole, the kidnapped woman, with her head sideways, holds on to the tail of the Killer-Whale, head down; the Eagle protector sits at the base of the pole (*No. 190*).

The Bear-Mother myth was so familiar a theme in carving, among the mainland folk and the islanders, that Chapman could not fail to appropriate it in his turn. Charlie Edensaw, his elder at Massett, previously had borrowed it from his Skidegate kinsmen on his father's side. It is present in at least four poles of Chapman.

In illustration *No. 191*, the young woman at the top with her mouth open, seems to be crying; her head is turned to the left, and she holds her child on her breast; at the base of the same pole, the Grizzly clasps her between his arms and bites the top of her head. Her back is turned to him, and she weeps, resting her hands on his knees. The Raven, in the centre of the pole, whose head is larger than his body, is associated once more with the Frog, who hangs head down, in front of the Raven's body (Cf. *Haida Myths*. No. 70).

Bear Mother in pole *No. 191*, which is devoted mostly to the Raven and the Butterfly, sits in the middle, holding her two cubs under her arms on either side, while her tongue protrudes and meets, like a bridge, that of the Frog, who faces her. The revival here of the older Sasaw pattern discloses an influence on Chapman which links him with the earliest carvers of argillite poles rather than with his presumed master, Edensaw. His style and under-cutting clearly resemble those of the first argillite





195. Woman, Grizzly, Beaver



196. Thunderbird, Whale, Grizzly

totems and point to a hidden connection between the craftsmen and their art.

The same Sasaw theme<sup>1</sup> of the long projecting tongue reappears in a second pole by Chapman (87396, 400, 1. *No. 192*). Bear Mother here holds her tongue with her hands, stretching it down to the forehead of one of her two cubs, whose body and head, at her feet, are turned downward; her other cub squats forward on her head. The group is among the most effective illustrations of this ancient theme. The other figures at the base are the Thunderbird with the Whale on his body, head upward.

Still another presentation of the Sasaw tongue projection occurs in a pole (87402, 3. *No. 193*) where a growling Bear sits at the top, holding on to the curved fin of the Killer-Whale in the manner of Nanasingyet's wife. And at the base the Bear sits with his long drooping tongue in both hands, and a head, upside down, receives it in its mouth.

A sixth illustration of the Sasaw pattern is found in a pole (87387, 8. *No. 194*) where the Frog, with a dorsal fin instead of the usual cub, squats on the head of the Grizzly who is projecting his broad tongue down upon the head of a large cub; a second Bear (the husband) sits up at the base, holding the Frog, head down, in both his hands.

One more occurrence of the Bear Mother motif connects it again with the Nanasingyet myth (Cf. *Haida Myths*, No. 47); the grouping of the figures in this pole is admirably circular in its composition.

<sup>1</sup> (Cf. *Haida Myths*, No. 48, for an additional example of this theme).



At the top of another pole, the Woman, whose head is tossed sideways, is carried away on the shoulders of the Grizzly, her legs being clasped by her captor. The Beaver stands at the base (87400, 401. *No. 195*).

The Grizzly-Bear by itself and Bear Mother with one or two cubs are among the favourite motifs in the poles of Chapman; they appear many times in various forms (87574, not shown, as well as in *No. 47, Haida Myths*). In 87574, the Grizzly's head and front paws are set in a halo, the halo feature being borrowed from Russian icons long familiar at Sitka and elsewhere in Alaska.

The Bear in three other instances pulls his tongue with his hands down the middle of his body; in one instance, it reaches down to a small human head between his feet (87394,5; 87394 not shown (87403,2. *No. 196*). Elsewhere, the Bear eats a salmon held in his fore-paws, and the Raven's head is turned upward on his body (87402,03. *No. 197*). In one case, Bear Mother sits alone in the middle of the pole, and on her head a single cub, perhaps a frog, is turned downward (87351. Not shown).



Chapman was fond of showing the Grizzly as it captured a sea mammal or struggled with one, for instance in *Nos. 198, 199, 200* (Photos 87387,8; A.P. 138-2 in 1947; 87395,6). The land animal held head down in the Bear's hands against its body is a small quadruped or a bird, as in *Nos. 201 to 204* (Photos 87392; 87402,3; 87392,3). The Grizzly sits up erect and alone, his hands joined on his chest in *Nos. 205, 206, 207* (Photos 87391, 87396, 87387,9).

Wearing a Raven head-dress, a sea hunter in the upper half of a Chapman pole stands behind a huge Sea-Lion; he holds it up in his hands and tears it asunder. The monster's tail, split into halves, rises to both sides of his head, partly concealing it in its wavy tips. The Beaver gnawing a stick, and its offspring, head down, fill the lower half of the pole (Cf. *Haida Myths*, *No. 283*).

In a second illustration of the same theme (*No. 208*) to the right (Photo 87391,6), the sea hunter does not wear his Bird-of-the-Air magical cap, but has momentarily lost it to the hands of his mother-in-law, who sits at the base of the same pole and holds it in her grasp. Here the woman wears a labret in her lower lip, and her face is made to resemble that of the Thun-





198. Frog, Bear eating seal



199. Bear, Shark, Beaver, Raven

derbird, her nose being in the form of a curved beak; feathers cover her body below her arms, the Thunderbird presumably being her totem. And her resentful son-in-law is swallowing the sea monster, whose tail runs deep into his mouth. In this and the former compositions, Chapman's power in reinterpreting a familiar subject is unmistakable. Although he must have known his elder's work, he does not betray their influence in his own work, which is quite original. His treatment of the hunter, and of Soo'san and the mother-in-law are among the finest on record, and, as it must have been inspired by the Tlingit version of the story, it may pass here under the northern name of Konakadet, rather than under the Haida name of Soo'san (87398,9. No. 209).

The following is a summary of the Konakadet myth, as published by H. P. Corser (*Totem Lore of the Alaska Indians*, p. 27), which discloses its main differences from the Tsimsyan and the Haida form.

A man, who married a high caste girl in another town, was a great gambler. Incensed, his mother-in-law openly called him a worthless fellow and shamed him away from the village, into a hut near a lake—behind old Wrangell. The young man, coming back to reason, took his stone axe and split open a large tree and made a dead-fall to trap a monster in a lake, of which he had often heard. After he had caught the monster, taken off its skin and put it on his own body, he found that he could swim about like the monster itself. Part of the time he remained in the sea, hunting whales and sea lions.

Famine soon overtook the village and the young hunter began to bring to his mother-in-law's door-step plenty of sea food—salmon, halibut, and larger fish, even whales. The





old woman was vain enough to believe that she had brought about this bounty by her own powers as a shaman. And she became boastful and arrogant.

One day the young hunter attempted more than he could achieve and was found dead on the beach in his sea garment between the two whales he had just captured. And there, discovering the truth at last about the old woman's son-in-law and her deceit, the people made fun of her and called him Konakadet. They hung the body of the young man up in a tree close to shore, and his sorrowful mother-in-law went there to weep ever after. Whenever anybody nowadays hears her weeping and repenting, the people are glad in their hearts, because it is said to bring them good luck.<sup>1</sup>

Recorded by Dr. Swanton (Jesup . . . , p. 226), the Haida form of this myth, under the name of Soo'san, has been illustrated several times by the craftsmen of Massett. Here it is in brief:

A youth, much annoyed by unflattering remarks of his mother-in-law, went to a small lake behind the town of Gwaiskun and caught a sea grizzly bear, which he skinned. Every morning after that he went out to sea dressed in this skin. He caught a fish or some sea animal and dragged it where his mother-in-law could find it. She began, after a while, to act as a shaman and prophesied what she would find the next day. So it always happened, until at last she declared that her power would show itself on the following morning. Then everybody waited on the beach for her. But when the Sea-Bear came to shore with a large fish, it was her son-in-law who stepped out of it, and she died of shame.

Derivative forms of the Konakadet or Soo'san myth are interpreted in at least three other poles of Chapman, only one of which is shown here (87404,5. No. 210).

One of the finest of Chapman's illustrations of a myth, also one of the most intricate, was that of the Woman and the Woodworm or Caterpillar. It seems to have been his own innovation, for it has not been found anywhere else among the Haida (Cf. *Haida Myths*, No. 197).

<sup>1</sup> This myth was recorded among the Tlingit by Dr. J. R. Swanton under the title of "Origin of the Gonaqadet" ("Tlingit myths and texts", *Bur. Amer. Ethn.*, Bull. 39, p. 435).





202. Woman  
chief, Bear,  
Frog



203. Sea monster, Bear



204. Raven,  
Dogfish, Bear



205. Person with  
fish, Bear,  
Raven

The presence of the Beaver here shows that the Woodworm or Caterpillar was actually the crest of an Eagle clan among the Haida. The Caterpillar, under the name of Rhtsenawsu was a crest among the Tsimshyan of the coast opposite the Queen Charlotte Islands; that name refers to the yellow colour of caterpillars. Among the Tsimshyan, the Rhtsenawsu was carved out of wood, with the head of the grizzly bear at one end and two other heads along the caterpillar-like body which was painted yellow. It was the property of a few families at the canyon of the Skeena in Legyærh's own tribe or in the neighbourhood; but it was among his own Eagle-Beaver crests. The actual owners belonged to the local Grizzly-Killer-Whale clan. The tribal connection between Legyærh and the Caterpillar kinsmen of the canyon, and his family ties with the Eagle-Beavers of Massett, of whom Chapman was a member, explain why this craftsman knew of the emblem and introduced it, at least once, in his work.

The myth which inspired his creation must have been familiar to him, but it was borrowed from the Tsimshyan and their neighbours to the north and south, and it was associated with the Sisiutl or Double-headed Horned Snake of the Kwakiutl. Among the Tsimshyan, the main event in the myth was located on the site of the present town of Prince Rupert. But, as recorded by Dr. Swanton (Jesup . . . , p. 230), among the Haida it is the story of the town of Tian and is called "The Woman who suckled a Woodworm." It is summed up in the following excerpt:

A woman of the Stikine family of Dalawadis (in the Tlingit country of Alaska) suckled a woodworm, which grew to enormous proportions, and, coming up to the houses from beneath, used to steal their food. The people finally banded together and killed it, and the woman's father for a long time would not give her in marriage to any one, until at



last an old man married her and she became old like him. Her husband, being a successful hunter, gave her people much food, then he went away never to return. The food he used to bring home changed to snails, worms, and frogs.

For Chapman's representation of the Woman and the Woodworm, see *Haida Myths*, Plate 197, and description, p. 253. Chapman was influenced, in his new subject, by the walking sticks of the scrimshaw type, as carved by white sailors, which he must have seen. A cane collected at Gitwanga, on the upper Skeena, makes it plain that the snake pattern on walking sticks had spread elsewhere in the country.

The Thunderbird was a favourite theme for Chapman, and it is no wonder. For a number of years it had been popular all over the North Pacific Coast, and the Skidegate clans of the Killer-Whale or Raven phratry that first introduced it did not object to its use by the northerners after the collapse of the crest system. Besides, it belonged more or less to everybody who had had dealings with the Russians, whose Imperial crest it was. The Thunderbird occurs about fifteen times in the Cunningham and the Brentzen collections alone; and only occasionally did Chapman couple it with the Whale or Killer-Whale, as the earlier craftsmen had done.

The mythical Thunderbird is often shown with the Whale or Killer-Whale, as it was believed to feed on Whales. The Whale, in one place, is held upwards, in the bird's human hands; twice, in another, it is held head down. When it is with its head below, the tail of the fish flops down upon its back in a pattern that was followed by Massett imitators of a later date. In a few occurrences, the Whale is larger than the bird; elsewhere it is smaller. The Whale's place, in some instances, is taken by a small animal, a face, or a mask. Then it began to disappear, and in a few poles by Chapman it did not appear at all. The bill of the Thunderbird does not always curve back almost to its base, but, like the Eagle's, it is at times only slightly bent down at the tip; and this is true whether or not the bird is





associated with the Whale. In one instance, the curved bill replaces the nose in a human face that is meant for the bird's, as the wings and talons are present.

The Eagle occurs about twelve times in the same collections, and his stylization is so much like the Thunderbird's or the Raven's that the identification can be only tentative. In a most interesting example (87400,1. *No. 211*), the Eagle is perched at the top of the pole holding up a woman who wears a labret; and the woman clutches another Eagle by the neck. This may be an illustration of the myth of the Giant Clam at the point where the old medicine-woman rushed to the rescue of her sons who were being dragged down into the sea (Cf. *Haida Myths*, No. 293).

In two other poles, the Eagle appears in an illustration of the Soo'san myth. In one instance (*No. 206*) he is at the top of the pole with a small Grizzly-Bear-of-the-Sea on his head and a woman under him with a cylindrical hat on her head and a Thunderbird-like bill. The mystic bird is none other than the young hunter attired in his Eagle garment to capture sea monsters and drag them at night to his mother-in-law's doorstep. Here the sprawling posture of the mother-in-law presumably alludes to her disgrace. In another, the Eagle holds the woman in his talons. The Thunderbird sits at the base of the pole (Photo 87394. Not shown).

The Eagle or Thunderbird is coupled with the Shark, as it should be, in at least two other poles, the Shark being a subsidiary totem of the migratory Eagle or Thunderbird clan from the north. And a few times he is shown with the Frog dangling in front of him or under his talons (Photos 87392,3; 87398,9. *Nos. 212, 213*).





In Chapman's repertory, the Raven is as common a figure as the Thunderbird and the Eagle, but it is not easy to tell them apart. The Raven's bill often is reduced in length because of decorative requirements. And Chapman did not characterize this bird as often as Edensaw had done. Like him, he used it more frequently as an illustration in the Creation myth than as a mere totem.

Of all the figures in Chapman's varied repertory the Frog is the most typical and beautifully stylized (*No. 215*). It reveals the carver's power to recreate nature, and it occurs from fifteen to twenty times in the Cunningham collection alone. It was no doubt one of his favourites, to the point of being substituted occasionally for other totems because of the pleasure he found in modelling it. For instance, in one illustration of the Woman holding the fin of the Killer-Whale (87392,3. Not shown) in the Nanasim-gyet myth, he replaced the kidnapped Woman by the Frog (87400,1. *No. 214*). His success in fashioning the Frog was due to his talent to infuse nature to an uncanny degree into his art, and to stylize it with no less imagination than the most gifted among his compatriots. When the Frog is shown sitting up smugly at the top of a pole, resting his hands on his knees and venting his Batrachian feelings, with his mouth slightly open, the expression in the face and the body is unforgettable. On one statuette



210. Person with Halibut  
(*Raven* inside), Beaver



211. Eagle, Woman, Eagle



(No. 215), the human-like Frog walks erect, holding a box with a supporting hand on his uplifted shoulder. The posture and the effort are so convincing and the composition so lovely that we are prompted to call it a masterpiece. Another specimen, now lost, belonged to the Deasy collection, since broken up. In several poles, the Frog appears in a familiar stylization, hanging from the mouth of an animal or the beak of a bird. It is usually graceful and decorative.

The Shark was too familiar a totem, especially at Skidegate, not to appeal to Chapman. It was also a crest of the migratory Eagle clans of which he was a member. He handled it in his own original way no less than nine times in the Cunningham collection, where the body of the fish is placed in full above its head. In the strangest of its representations (No. 212), the Shark's oval face, for once without the usual gills, is decorated with engravings, and his nose is a hooked beak, like the Thunderbird's.

The character of the Shark is quite different in Chapman's next stylization. Instead of being medallion-like and semi-detached from the body, the head tapers into an ell-like wedge, and two gills are engraved on either side, next to a fin. On the back rises a long, curved fin entering the mouth of the man holding it above (No. 209). This pattern may be traced back to the Nanasingyet myth, where the woman rides the Killer-Whale; the Shark in an interesting pattern is here substituted for the Whale.

The Shark carvings, although all different, belong to a familiar type. The fantastic, mask-like head of the Shark is given full-face, from the bottom up, and the whole body rises above, throwing forward a dorsal fin (or two fins) and tossing a fan-like tail to one side or the other. The gills appear only twice on this set, although the other carvers were particular never to omit these symbols which might have stood for the whole.



212. Shark, Eagle



213. Raven, Frog,  
Thunderbird and  
Whale





A man and a bear, in two cases, hold up the tail of the fish, the man being of the Stistas clan of the Eagles in the north, as is shown by the three cylinders on his ceremonial hat. The nose of the Shark, in the last pole of this set, ends in a hooked beak like that of the Thunderbird, just as it did in another fish monster, whose face is human and whose identity may be the same (*Nos. 186, 204, 209, 212, 213*).

The Beaver is another important theme in Chapman's repertory; it figures no less than ten times in the Cunningham collection. It was a leading crest in his clan and tribe. It is given twice as an illustration in the Creation myth in connection with the Raven (*No. 184*). On the head of another Beaver we see the *Skyil* or column of cylinders.

Elsewhere the Beaver's incisors are smaller than is customary, but his tail is longer, to the point of reaching his chin, and is decorated with a human face and a feather-like tip (*No. 210*). In five more examples with varied details, the Beaver sits erect at the base of the pole and gnaws a poplar stick; he shows his incisors in every instance but his checkered tail only once (*No. 199*). In one place, he wears on his head the Stistas hat with three cylinders, a detail showing that here he is considered a crest,



214. Frog, Whale, Beaver



215. The Frog carrying a box  
(Nat. Mus. Can.)



not an illustration. Twice the young Beaver appears on his body, head down and tail outstretched, in a position not yet seen elsewhere (*No. 214*). On the last Beaver carving, which is decadent, only the paws are raised, as if to hold the poplar stick; all the special features have vanished. (Not shown).

Among the casual figures in Chapman's repertory, the most intriguing is the elephant-like head (*No. 211*) with a curled trunk in the form of a volute or a fiddle-head. In this the craftsman was reverting to an older pattern already recorded elsewhere and presumably derived from pictures or stories of Asiatic elephants on board ship. Here it is assimilated to the concept of the Thunderbird with a long incurved bill. Another casual figure, the woman chieftain sitting at the top of the pole (*No. 202*), who wears a three-cylinder hat and holds with her hands a labret reaching down to her feet, is probably the mythical ancestress Dzelarhons of the Eagle clans. The long cane-like labret is one of her main characteristics. Her face is grave and quite typical of the race. This may have been drawn from nature, as Chapman had the repute of being a good portraitist.

In the Cunningham collection of miniature totems, a few remaining figures from the hand of Chapman are of men and women; these are few in comparison with the number of mythical or totemic animals.

#### JOHN MARKS (IRHTEENA)

John Marks, whose Haida name was Irhteena or Irhteene, belonged to Massett. Irhteena was the ancient name of the Kawas or Sea-Egg family<sup>1</sup> (according to Dr. Swanton). At the age of 63 in 1939, he was reputed to be the best argillite and silver or gold carver then surviving at Massett. In the summers he would spend some time carving for tourists at the McRea Brothers' store in Prince Rupert.

His carving, which I saw him doing at Prince Rupert, retained the native quality of the ancient craft, despite his failing sight. He left the store early that summer to be replaced by Arthur Moody. For, in the eyes of his patrons, he lacked the gift of a salesman, being an unassuming man, indifferent to the sale of his candle-holders and book-rests in argillite and of his small wooden poles.

He belonged to an Eagle clan and was a distant 'clan nephew' of Charlie Edensaw (according to Alfred Adams). He trained for his craft with his uncle and "associated with him, when young, especially in the winter time. He stayed with him a great deal." Adams sold many of his things for him, in particular to the manager of the Bank of Montreal in Prince Rupert, Mr. Lee, who found his work so fine that he made a collection of his carvings and when he left, took it East with him.

<sup>1</sup> In the Skidegate census we find a mention of Tom Marks, b. 1880; "John Marks b: 1882."



216. A Woman,  
Humming-bird  
(repeated)



The sub-clan of the Stistas Eagles, of which he was a member, is the Sangahlahnos. The crests of this sub-clan, as listed by Dr. Swanton, were the Beaver, the Frog, the Raven, the Eagle, and S'agnu. His mother was Lucy Alexander named Kindue, an Eagle. His maternal uncles were said (by Peter Hill) to have been high chiefs at Kyusta; they belonged to the clan headed by the Edensaws. His father was Mark Alexander or Slinge, "Foundation", a Raven. From his name of Slinge we may infer that he belonged to the Slenga-lanos or Rear-Town People. John Marks, on his father's side, must then have been related to the argillite carver Kingego and the wood carver Gwaytihi, who were also Ravens of the same tribe. Their crests were the Killer-Whale, the Hawk, the Grizzly Bear, the Thunderbird, and Cumulus-Cloud.

His uncle John Duwatts, whom he succeeded (according to Peter Hill), was a fisherman and a 'perfect' canoe carver. While helping him he learned how to make large dug-out canoes. In those days canoes "brought a steady income to the Haida." These canoes were made for the Stikine and the Skeena tribes, also for the Hudson's Bay Company. At the same time he became "a good shooter" in fur-seal hunting at sea.

John Marks used to fish and hunt a part of the year, and in the winter he fished for crabs with the others at Naden Harbour. After "he found out that he could not stand the rough water any more, he stepped out of it and devoted all his time to carving silver and gold, slate and wood." But he owned a gas boat and could still travel on the sea. He was the only one in his family to run it, as he "had nothing but daughters."

The argillite totem poles attributed to him belong to the Lipsett collection at Vancouver; the first of them was secured from Webber, a curio dealer. Other wooden or argillite poles by him were seen in the 1920's at Pat Philipson's in Prince Rupert. The wooden poles were 40 or 50 inches high. Recently-made poles, candle-holders, and book-rests in argillite were displayed at McRea Brothers' in the same town.

The taller of the two Lipsett poles, 12 inches high, is a remarkable composition in the semi-realistic vein familiar in Massett, and the figures



217. Siren-like being



illustrate a myth. The nude figure of the Woman with the Woodworm or Caterpillar in the centre of the pole is an illustration of the tale of the young woman whose pet was the greedy insect or worm that grew to huge proportions and destroyed many people in the coastal district where Prince Rupert now is located. The Woman and Caterpillar became the crest of a family there. It was seldom interpreted in carving, except in a

small argillite pole by Chapman the cripple, and later in this one by John Marks; they were contemporaries and both came from Massett (Cf. *Haida Myths*, No. 198). The Caterpillar with a long segmented body, slanting a little to the right, is held upward by the Woman against her body. Its head rests against her left breast, as she nurses it. Her face and her hands, as well as her plump body, are more realistic than usual. Her long hair, parted in the middle, reaches down to her eyebrows, and the wide irises of her eyes are made of abalone shell insertions.



The figure at the bottom of the pole is Dzelarhons, here shown as a crest belonging to the carver's clan and explaining its origin. Dzelarhons, the Frog ancestress of the mainland, used to wear the Humming-Bird tied to her hair in a peculiar manner (Dr. Swanton's *The Haidas*, pp. 95, 110). In John Mark's interpretation, she holds the Butterfly between her hands on her knees; his wings are spread out and his legs stretched down. The eyes of both the Woman and the Butterfly are abalone shell insertions.

At the top, the Thunderbird carries the Whale in his talons. This is the clan crest of the carver's father. He must have used it with the owner's implied permission, just as Edensaw freely appropriated the Grizzly

218. A totem on a siren. Small silver mask (Mrs. Viola Garfield's coll., Seattle)



Bear of his own paternal clan. The Eagle spreads out his wings and tilts his head to one side in a fighting attitude. The spirited realism here reminds us that Marks was a northern or Massett Haida of the same clan and generation as Chapman and Andrew Brown, both of whom represented the mythic bird in the same style.



219. Nude woman (Lipsett coll. Vancouver)

The second Lipsett pole attributed to Marks is no less exquisite, though it is smaller (9 inches high) than the first and too delicate. The Thunderbird or the Eagle is placed at the bottom of the pole; above, bent forward, biting his own tail, is the Whale. The small quadruped walking on the back of the Whale is the Grizzly Bear. All these were crests of the carver's father.

A third pole may also be attributed to him because of its style and because of the nude figure of a Woman sitting at the top—he seems to have been the only one who carved nudes. Her hair, parted in the middle, is tied up in a toque at the back, and her hands are joined in front of her. Under her is the Humming-bird, with an unusual representation of the eyes—two circles, one within the other, and a dot in the centre. The third figure, at the bottom, with a human face between the wings, seems to be a repetition of the Humming-bird, a crest of the carver's family (*No. 216*).

The siren-like figure by the same carver is represented in another totem. The lower part of her body is similar to the other siren's. The only difference in the upper part is that the head rests sideways on her outstretched left arm, and a human hand is attached to the right arm, also outstretched. The left side of the parted hair hangs over the right shoulder, and the left side is ruffled and meets the outstretched right hand (*No. 217*).

In another exceptional piece of carving, presumably by Marks, a totem pole rests on the shoulders of a siren-like figure. The middle of her body is ribbed, her tail is like a seal's, and her head is crowned with long loose hair. Her face is turned back, and her round eyes gaze at the pole which stands on her. Her arms are bent sharply at the elbow and support the human part of her body on the ground (*No. 218*) (In Mrs. Viola Garfield's collection, at Seattle, Washington, Photos Nos. 102616, 102027, 102028). At the top of the pole, on the end of the tail of the Humming-bird, which is head down and rests on the head of the Grizzly Bear, the Frog sits.

An odd piece of sculpture in the Lipsett collection, attributed to John Marks or Arthur Moody—presumably by the first—is a small and very unusual nude woman. She lies on an elongated triangular block, in the manner of a studio piece, an attribute that can be clearly traced to the white man's influence. Except for the compass-made eyes, it is realistic and quite interesting. The nonchalant reclining body is young, round, and well shaped. The head rests on one hand, the bent elbow and raised forearm serving as support; the other arm drops across the middle of the body;



the knees are pressed together, pinching the outline here, and the feet are placed one over the other (*No. 219*).

An oval plate in the collection of the Rev. James Gillett at Prince Rupert was "made for us by John Marks about 1927." Its engraved pattern is firm and individual. In it the Grizzly Bear is shown with his head turned back. Its borders are decorated with triangular insertions of abalone shells ( $7\frac{1}{2}$ " x 5").

### 'CAPTAIN' ANDREW BROWN

(1865- )

(*Owt'iwans*—Big Eagle)

'Captain' Andrew Brown, an 'Eagle-Man', was one of the early members of a small group of craftsmen who came under the then prevailing influence of Charlie Edensaw. Born in 1865, he was still an active carver in 1939 (at 73 years of age), although his work lacked finish and precision because of his failing eye-sight. He seemed as buoyant and confident as he was during his rambling career on his island, at Vancouver, in Alaska, and at other places. In the photograph taken by the late Harlan I. Smith in 1919, he holds the wooden model of a gas boat (46672. Not shown).

When with his family at Prince Rupert in the summer of 1939, he could be seen daily carrying around small totems in paper bags, looking for customers for them at \$2 or \$3 each, and willing to tell the stories they represented to any one who would listen. After the writer had purchased a few of them, we sat down, and he gave me the tales of the Raven stealing the Sun from the Old Fisherman, how the Raven had drawn the first little men on earth out of a clam, and how the Raven had lost his beak when pulling at the halibut hook at the bottom of the sea. He also explained the pole of the Thunderbird and the Whale, and Soo'san and the sea monsters (4" and 5". *Nos. 220, 221*).



220, 221. Raven after the loss of his bill, Thunderbird and Whale (author's coll.)



Whenever a boat carrying tourists drew alongside the wharf, 'Captain' Andrew Brown stood there, as his elders here and in other coastal towns had done before him. Holding his new carvings up to transient customers, he chatted in broken English and bargained with them for the highest price he could get. Once, in August 1939, he embarked with his bagful for the Alaskan towns to the north but was turned back at the frontier, probably because the licensed merchants beyond the border were opposed to his competition on their preserves.

The reason Brown was known as 'Captain' was that, according to his own account, he "was the first to make a sailing schooner, at the time when the Hudson's Bay Company built a store at Massett." Big-Eagle (*Owt'-iwans*) became his Haida name as a chief, after it had been given up by his (maternal) grandfather, who had been chief of Nisto (or Hippah) Island on the northwestern side of the Queen Charlotte group. And he added, "When a whale was stranded there along a coast-line of forty miles, it was my grandfather's property. Beyond this limit, it belonged to other chiefs."

Brown had the Eagle tattooed on his right leg, and his brothers, so he said, had theirs on their chests. The four special crests of his clan were—the Eagle, *Tseeda*; the Skate, *Hlkyan-kwestan*; the Frog; and *Tsen*, the Incisors of the Beaver.

He was described by Alfred Adams, his contemporary, as a Gyitens Eagle of Yan village and a member of the Stihltæ family on his mother's side. The following information on Chief Stihltæ was recorded by Dr. Swanton (*The Haida* . . . Jesup, p. 292):

"In Yan village, there was among many others, the 'House-looking-at-its beak,' of which Steeltæ—Returned—was the owner. The curved block of wood, which in the old times took the place of the house-pole on this house, bore the beak of a bird standing out in front."

*Owt'iwans* or Andrew Brown (according to Adams) was a wood and argillite carver



222. Small totems by 'Captain' Brown (Dr. T. Mandy's coll.)



and one of the best boat-builders on the Islands. He built the *Queen Charlotte*, the first schooner at Massett, and he had constructed another elsewhere, which was wrecked on Dundas Island. A relative of Robert Ridley, the carver, Brown took him as a partner in the construction of more schooners (according to Peter Hill, of Massett): the *Annie D.* and *Seabird*. "*Seabird* was a wind-jammer; and *Annie D.* was a gas boat. Now he owns the *Ruth G.*" He occasionally made large totems. For instance, around 1920 at New Westminster he carved a pole about forty feet high.

His production at its best came too late to be well represented in museum collections, and it is difficult to estimate his talent as a carver of argillite. Yet the Frog, 3½ inches high, with abalone shell eyes, made by him before 1925 and now (in 1947) in the Rev. Mr. Gillett's collection at Prince Rupert, is realistic, yet well stylized, and is of fine quality. Its owner, who had known Brown for many years, added, "He was doing very nice work at that time." Fairly recent specimens attributed to him by Dr. T. Mandy, who owns them (at Prince Rupert at the time), illustrate his themes and technique. His subjects are the Eagle, the Beaver, the Bear, the Bear and the Woman, the Bear and the Salmon, the Seal, the Frog, the Wasco, the Crab (his own innovation), the man on the back of the Ruck, the Whale and the Raven (87424. No. 222).



223. Small oval dish by 'Captain' Brown



It was from his father Kingego, the sculptor of statuettes of Slinglanaws (Rear-Town), that Andrew Brown learned carving. "He is ever ready to put out his work, and he does not consider it inferior to the best," according to Peter Hill of Massett. "Of whatever quality his work, he always



224. Oval plate with martens and salmon  
(State Mus. Wash., Seattle)

boasts 'That's fine!' He is a great joker and is known in Massett, his native town, as a good entertainer. He tells many tales and can make up a good story. Without a school education, he is a pretty smart old boy. During the summers, he fishes and seines salmon, having a large seine boat, even now, in his old age. And, in the slack winter months, he does his slate work."

His most elaborate carvings consist of two interesting argillite plates, one of which is given (*No. 223*). The first of these shows the Eagle with outspread wings alighting on the oval dish, the rim of which is decorated with abalone squares or diamonds. Within the dish, a woman, perhaps a siren with seal flippers, is lying, her eyes closed. On her chin rests a bird's head and bill. At the opposite end of the plate we see a bird's talons, (the Eagle's) and feathered tail, and the tail of a seal. The circular cavity at the back of the Eagle shows that the whole piece was meant for an ash tray.

The rim of the other oval plate is also decorated with abalone pearl in the shape of diamonds. The long bodies of the two furred animals, turned in opposite directions, bridging the two sides of the dish, are presumably Minks or Martens. And two Salmon lie criss-cross (At the State Museum of Washington, Seattle. Photo Arthur Price, G-10 in 1947. *No. 224*).

Mrs. William Robins' collection contains several small poles by 'Captain' Brown, which are of fair quality. The themes illustrated here are the Thunderbird and Whale or Shark, the Bear and the Beaver, the Eagle, the Raven who has lost his bill, the Raven holding in his bill the side of the Beaver house, the Raven child grasping in his hands the ball of light (102030, 102029. Not shown).

In the first of a group of three poles a person clasps the pile of disks (*skyils*) on the head of a bird who sits erect, presumably the Eagle; in the second, the Thunderbird raises the Whale in his talons; and in the third, the Eagle is at the top; the Shark below, in quadruped form, holds a stick in both hands (102031,2. Not shown).

In the first of two other poles, not shown, the Eagle is at the top, and two human-like animals sit erect, one above the other; in the second are the Thunderbird and the Whale, with Wasco at the base (102034. Not shown).

Also by 'Captain' Brown is the argillite totem containing the Shark. The Shark's tail is wrapped around the head of the Woman who stands on its back and holds on with both hands. The Shark-Woman grasps two bear cubs in her arms—a form inconsistent with the usual concept of Bear Mother (*No. 225*).





225. Woman, Shark, Bear cubs



A fairly tall argillite pole in the Raley collection at Vancouver was also produced by 'Captain' Brown. The figures embodied are, from the top down, the Bear biting the tail of a fish hanging down; the Raven with a fish crosswise in his bill; at the base, the Bear (or perhaps the Raven in the form of a bear) with the Raven's bill hanging on his stomach (87290. Not shown).

In the Lipsett collection at Vancouver, a fairly elaborate pole by Brown contains, from the top down, the Bear reclining on the ceremonial hat of Su'san, the Strong Man, and tearing a Sea-lion apart and at the base the Eagle (87294, 5. No. 226).

In another pole in the same Vancouver collection, we see reclining on one another, from the top down, a Seal (?), the Eagle, and a man; and the Bear, in sitting position at the base (Not shown).

In 1947, photographs of 'Captain' Brown and his wife and daughter were taken at Massett (102098, 102100. No. 227).

### DANIEL STANLEY

Usually called Dan, he was a nephew of the Eagle or Thunderbird head-chief Wihæ of Massett. His reputation is that of "a very fine carver." Yet he never carved actual totem poles. He died in 1911 at the early age of 30 or 32.<sup>1</sup> As he was of a leading Eagle clan, his Haida name was *Skiltq'atsu* or *Skyilqoldzo*, "He-who-waits-for-the-Fairies." This name was recorded in 1904 by Dr. Swanton as being that of John Wihæ of the Sadzugahl tribe, which was said to have descended from the mythical ancestress Djilaqons. This clan, like that headed by Edensaw, was part of the group of migratory Thunderbirds from the northern mainland. Its emblems were the Eagle, the Beaver, the Sculpin, and the Frog (*The Haida* . . . Jesup . . . p. 275).

Stanley's work included silver and gold engraving, the making of wooden masks, and occasionally argillite work. He learned much of it from Charlie Edensaw, and his own 'grandfather' Simeon Stihltæ, who taught him. Once he built the *Princess Victoria*, a two-masted schooner, for a white fisherman. It was the largest ever undertaken on the Queen Charlotte Islands. And he was known as a "self-made man, knowing English pretty well," who mingled with the white people.

Although he fished all summer, mostly up the Skeena, he managed to get a good deal of carving done. He had begun early in life. From his child-

<sup>1</sup> Information about him and other Massett craftsmen usually was given by Alfred Adams and Peter Hill, their contemporaries.







227. 'Captain' Andrew Brown and his wife (1947)

hood he learned his art from his family, as there were good designers and carvers there— John Wihæ and Simeon Stihltæ. His silver and gold work was of his own composition, the best in those days. His repertory was not restricted to the emblems of his mother's kind, as the carvers did not keep to "the old crests." As Peter Hill puts it, "their work was all very much alike, and the crests had been abandoned. They could pretty well all of them carve the same figures as they pleased." Like his fellow craftsmen, Stanley would take his work with him in the winter and travel south to Victoria and Vancouver, where he would find a ready market.



## OTHER CONTEMPORARY MASSETT CRAFTSMEN

## ROBERT RIDLEY

(185 ?-1934)

Robert Ridley of Massett bore the Haida name of Owt'iwans or Big-Eagle before he relinquished it to his nephew Andrew Brown. His earlier name was Gainya, apparently in the Tlingit language. He was the son of chief Gysisawawk of the village of Yan, opposite Massett, and is credited with a good deal of wood carving and a little argillite work. He died in 1934, nearly 80 years of age.

Until middle life Ridley was a fisherman. He built the schooner *Queen Charlotte* and for a while was its captain, but later on he returned to fishing and sea hunting. "He killed as many sea-otters (*qrhow*) as anybody." After his health began to fail, he divided his time between the sea and work at home. "When rather old, he began to carve. His work was not as neat as that of his fellow-workers; it always was a little rough" (according to Peter Hill). "But he found it better than the others, because it was done in the old way. The people at first had used adzes, without sandpaper. So he would say, this is the original hand of the Haida." Toward the end of his life, he devoted all his time to carving for outsiders, often making (wooden) totem poles 5 or 6 feet high.

He also painted boxes and paddles, which were a specialty on the Islands. For many years his work was for sale in the curio stores of Victoria, at Webber's in Vancouver, also at Goldbloom's and Heilbronner's in Prince Rupert. "There is a lot of his wood carving, rather crude, in many places" (according to Alfred Adams). "Very able, he did his work in a hurry and he never was a finisher." In his later years, among his favourite subjects were the Haida canoe and people in dug-out canoes. As he had been a canoe builder he knew well how to make dug-outs. On the hill of Government House at Victoria, stands a totem pole by him, which illustrates the Eagle totem and his story—"a nice story", once transcribed by Adams for a Vancouver trader.

A small Raven, 3½ inches high, in the Rev. Mr. Gillett's possession at Prince Rupert, was carved by him when he was over 70; it is crude, yet its idea is original. Here he meant to represent the crest allotted to the missionary of his people, as such emblems at times were bestowed upon strangers as a mark of esteem.

## FRANK CHARLES (HAYNAAO)

(1875 ?- )

Frank Charles, whose Haida name is Haynaao, still carved silver and gold and a little argillite in 1939. The Rev. Mr. Gillett called him "a carver of bracelets." Over sixty years of age in 1939 and a cripple, he was a seminomad, living mostly at Cape Mudge and Campbell River, far from his Massett relatives. As the adopted grandson of chief Kwasas, he was an Eagle of the Dayan family of Gyitens. In the first part of his life he was called Kwawlang—"A sorcerer reborn." His father, a Tlingit of the neighbourhood of Wrangell, "gave him the idea of carving."



At first he was a fur-seal hunter and a hand-trolling fisherman. When he became lame, at about thirty years of age, he began to carve, and Alfred Adams 'handled' much of his work for him. He "still (in 1939) does a lot of work of fair quality and spends most of his time at it."

As he travelled on his own schooner, he often called at Vancouver Island to sell his work and finally found it more profitable to stay there. He provided Webber, the curio dealer at Vancouver, with much of his silver and argillite materials and "made a better living there than he did here."

### MATTHEW YEOMAN

Matthew Yeoman or "Old Hymans" (as Walter C. Waters, of Wrangell, called him) was a Massett Haida of over seventy years of age in 1939, whose name the Haida informants overlooked. Yet he seems to have been a good carver of wood and argillite—a "wonderful carver," if we accept Mr. Waters' estimate. A small Frog in Mr. Waters' collection, 3 inches in diameter, was carved by him in argillite and was included in the group of North Pacific Coast carvings shown at the Golden Gate Exhibition at Seattle in 1939.

Yeoman's career differed from that of Haida carvers. He was not born a Haida; he had been a slave. According to Mr. Waters, "he always lived by himself, among the Haida," but this did not keep him from being "a great talker." After he had resided for some years at Sukwan, in southern Alaska, he moved away. While employed on a ship as a seal-hunter, he went abroad and spent a winter in Japan. Other Haida like him (in Mr. Waters' opinion) must have landed in Asia at times, as they were picked up on a number of ships sailing north from Victoria, until an international treaty put a stop to this practice.

### FRANK PAUL (SWONTSUES)

Called Swontsues in Haida, Frank Paul was an Eagle of Sadzugelanos village, opposite Massett. In 1939 he was still carving silver and argillite. The family to which he belonged had Weehæ for its chief and claimed Dzelarhons for its ancestress. But as he had resided most of his life away from the Islands, and returned there only occasionally, he could not always count on a supply of argillite. In the employ of white people at Bella Coola or on coastal steamers, first as a deckhand and then as a quartermaster, he gave only part of his time to his native craft. But having become an independent carver and a fruit grower, he has produced a great deal more in recent years. As Peter Hill said, "He is at it all the time." In 1939 his name appeared in the press in connection with the gold bracelets that he carved for the Queen of England on the occasion of her visit to Vancouver. None of his work has been identified.

### ALEX YÆHLTETSEE

Yæhltetsee, a Stistas Eagle of Massett and an elderly argillite craftsman, was in his house working when the writer called and took photographs of him in 1939. He was a nephew of Charlie Edensaw, and when young he used to watch his uncle at work. His main crest, inherited from his mother,





228. Yæhltetsee carving argillite in his shop at Massett

Hwantrhen, who belonged to the Tlinkwan tribe, was the Beaver, which is represented with red cloth appliqués and shining white buttons on an old ceremonial blanket (87497. *No.* 228).

In 1939 he was engaged by Mr. Walter C. Waters to go and carve argillite for the tourist trade at his store in Wrangell, just as other Haida carvers had done for many years elsewhere.

Although craftsmen of the younger generation still preserve the tradition of their uncles, they have not the same interest. The reason given for this neglect is not sincere, as the demand for carvings is greater and their sales value has increased. It issues from misguided pride and is expressed in the often-repeated words, "We have been taught to be modern, progressive. We don't want to be mistaken for our uncles who wore blankets."



## OTHER MASSETT CARVERS OF ARGILLITE

Among the younger generation endowed with skill and talent, we recently noted (1939 and 1947) the following carvers:

Harry Ridley of Massett, who carved silver and argillite and received his training from his 'grandfather.'

George Paul Hill, son of Peter Hill of Massett, who was (in 1947) "practising carving at school and may have had his finishing touches from John Marks."

The carvers (presumably in Massett) of the following argillite poles have not been definitely identified:

(1) Three small totems of fine quality in a private collection, most of whose figures illustrate mythology: (First, to left) Clinging to the dorsal fin of the Killer-Whale, Nanasingyet or his wife being carried away to the lower world. (Second, in centre) A woman at the top; the Raven holding the Beaver's hut rolled up in his bill; the Whale biting his tail. (Third, to right) the Bear on all fours, at the top; the Raven holding the Beaver's house in his bill; the Beaver gnawing a poplar stick (*No. 229*).

(2) In another totem with the same figures but interpreted differently, the Beaver's hut in the Raven's bill is replaced here by a human face; the checkered tail of the Beaver at the base is decorated with a large human face (87302,3. Not shown).

(3) A quadruped (the Bear?), standing on all fours at the top of a small pole of fine quality, is reminiscent of the delicate handling of Isaac Chapman. The Whale, in the middle, bites his tail; the Eagle squats at the base (87365. Not shown).

(4) A crude specimen in the Lipsett collection at Vancouver, from the same area, presumably is either the work of a beginner or of one who has lost his talent because of age. At the top, the Whale or Seal, tail up, carries the Raven on his back. The Raven, in the centre, holds the Beaver's square hut in his bill; and at the base, grasping his poplar stick in both hands, the Beaver sits (87292,3. Not shown).

(5) Another piece, cruder still and suggesting the end of an age—that of argillite carving—shows the Thunderbird carrying the Whale in his talons. At the base sits the Bear (Not shown).



229. Massett totems



## APPENDIX

From Paul Rabut

In *The Standard*, New York, Friday, March 13, 1931:

## WORLD FAMOUS JADEITE TOTEMS:

Standing out in bold relief were two shelves full of highly polished jet-black stone images and when I called attention to them, the collector was instantly most alert. I knew I had discovered something of particular interest. The Colonel said: "That's part of the choicest section of the collection. I am told it is black jadeite. At any rate it was carved out by the Haida Indians of Graham Island, British Columbia. Those pieces you see were taken from a total of 511, the rest being kept in the vault downstairs, as they are too valuable to be left here. In fact, I have no room for them here. The Smithsonian Institute at Washington has a few and the Natural History Museum in New York has less than 100. The Museum of the American Indian in New York has a slim representation of the Haida Indian carving. As nearly as I can learn, this is very much the largest collection of its kind in the world. Some of it was loaned for exhibit in the Newark Museum recently and the New Jersey State Museum at Trenton wishes to borrow some next fall. The Canadian Pacific Railroad has asked me to loan them some typical pieces for display in their Madison avenue, New York, windows later this month, to advertise their summer tourist trips to Alaska. I understand the New York Times next Sunday will have a story about my collections with some pictures they made to illustrate the article. They sent a 'special story' writer out here last week."

Strange human images and creatures were cut from stone. The carvings equalled expert sculpture of the present day. I carefully lifted one to discover it had the weight of iron. There were no tool marks to show how they had been made. Great dishes, totem poles, pipes with ivory inlay and a death canoe with the dead warrior lying inside. A dish fashioned like an eagle was probably the handsomest piece I saw. [Six. statuettes "Black Jadeite Ceremonies Figure" reproduced in a photo. MB. They belong to the Deasy period and are similar. They show chiefs in regalia.

A large and fine dish is called "Largest Black Jadeite Dish, Carved by Haida Indians." It shows two Ravens opposite each other, and a large Spider between them. Fine carving. M.B. May be by Edensaw.















